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F. G. HOLWECK

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O. J. S. HOOG, V.G.

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THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT

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THE DOCTRINE OF  
THE ATONEMENT

A HISTORICAL ESSAY

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J.<sup>lean</sup> RIVIÈRE, D.D.

PROFESSOR AT THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF ALBI

AUTHORISED TRANSLATION

BY

LUIGI CAPPADelta

VOLUME II

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"Non æqualiter mente percipitur etiam quod in fide pariter ab utrisque recipitur."

AUGUSTINE, *In Joan.* tract xcviii. 2.

15141

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# THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT

## PART THE FOURTH

### THE ATONEMENT IN THE MIDDLE AGES

#### CHAPTER XVII

##### THE INTERMEDIATE CHANNELS

##### FROM THE SEVENTH TO THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

FROM the close of Patristic times to the beginning of Scholasticism in the eleventh century, Christian thought had to endure a long period not indeed of death but of complete inaction. During this time the Church, which had only just emerged from the ruin of the Roman Empire, was engaged in converting and civilising the Barbarians; speculation had to go to the wall before the more imperative demands of the Christian mission. Such intellectual life as still remained, was pent up within the enclosures of the monasteries, and even in these no original work was forthcoming, and the labour of their inmates was confined to the treasuring up of the thoughts and words of the Fathers, which were transcribed by the copyists, and, by the more scholarly recluses, worked up into their mosaic-like compilations. If then our object were to seek for novelties, we should certainly find



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but little to interest us in the works of these far-off compilers. But as a matter of fact they are interesting to us, not only because they are the links connecting two ages together, but because they show us in what form the Patristic data were handed down to the Middle Ages. For this reason they demand a few moments' consideration.

### I

The first of the series of links was St. Isidore of Sevilla, of whom it has been said that he was "the greatest compiler of his time and perhaps of all time."<sup>1</sup> In his summary of the doctrine of the Atonement he follows St. Augustine and St. Jerome.

The Word of God became man in order to draw nigher unto us and in order to suffer in His flesh :

"Deus Verbum . . . accepit carnem pro salute humana, in qua et impassibilis pati, immortalis mori et æternus ante sæcula temporalis posset ostendi."

By His death He brought a remedy for our misfortunes and paid thereby the penalty of our sins : "*Christus, sicut peccatum, quod pœna dignum est, non admisit, ita pœnam peccati nostri suscepit, ut per indebitam pœnam suam debitam aboleret culpam nostram.*" In His death was the only chance of our deliverance : "*Nam si innox Christus non occideretur, homo, diabolo addictus per prævaricationem, non absolveretur.*"<sup>2</sup>

Isidore elsewhere tells us that our Salvation depended on our Saviour's birth and death : "*Sicut propter redemptionem mundi illum decuit nasci, ita et*

<sup>1</sup> BARDENHEWER, *op. cit.* iii. p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> ISID. HISPAL. *Sentent.* lib. i. c. xiv. 4-13.—*P.L.* lxxxiii. ; col. 566-567.

*pati oportuit*,"<sup>1</sup> and a little farther on he reminds us that this death was a Sacrifice for our sins :

"Non pro suis, sed pro nostris peccatis crucifixus est . . . iuxta Apostolum qui dicit : Quia cum peccatum non cognovisset, ipse pro nobis peccatum factus est, *id est sacrificium pro peccatis nostris*." <sup>2</sup>

From which we see that St. Isidore faithfully repeated the sayings of his predecessors respecting the substitutional and sacrificial character of Christ's death.

We find them again repeated by St. Bede in the following century. Christ was the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.<sup>3</sup> What He offered was no brute creature but Himself :

"Sacrificavit Filius Dei pro peccatis nostris, non hostias pecudum sed seipsum offerendo." <sup>4</sup>

He thereby delivered us from our sins and from death itself :

"Mortem crucis patiendo, credentes in se ab omni peccato et ab ipsa etiam morte liberat." <sup>5</sup>

Christ alone could thus wipe out our sins, He alone being without stain : "*Nemo tollit peccata . . . nisi ille in quo peccatum non est*." <sup>6</sup> Christ's death had also a penal value : "*Qui pro nobis mortem carnis indebitam reddidit nos a debita animæ morte liberavit*." <sup>7</sup> We find the same idea even more forcibly expressed in a Commentary on the Psalms which, though it does not belong to Bede, is printed among his works :

<sup>1</sup> *De fide cath. contra Iudæos*, lib. I. c. v. 11 ; *ibid.* col. 462.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* c. xliii. ; col. 487-488.

<sup>3</sup> VEN. BED. *In Ioan.* i.—*P.L.* xcii. 648.

<sup>4</sup> *In 1 Ioan.* iv.—*P.L.* xciii. 108.

<sup>5</sup> *In Ioan.* iii.—*P.L.* xcii. ; col. 671. *Cp. ibid.* vi. ; col. 717.

<sup>6</sup> *1 Ioan.* iii.—*P.L.* xciii. ; col. 100.

<sup>7</sup> *1 Ioan.* i. ; col. 88. *Cp. In Ioan.* xiv.—*P.L.* xcii. ; col. 836.

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“Quæ delicta feci mea, quia pœnam eorum in me transtuli.”<sup>1</sup>  
“Pro peccatis pœnas pertuli qui peccatum non commisi. . . .  
Peccatorum non commissor sed susceptor sum, ita tamen ut in me  
delicta non suscipiam, sed pœnas pro ipsis luam.”<sup>2</sup>

But an even clearer passage, in which we read that Christ could suffer only for our redemption and that we could be redeemed only by His Passion, really belongs to Bede: “[*Impossibile*] *vel Christum sine nostræ redemptionis amore pati potuisse, vel nos sine illius passione salvari.*”<sup>3</sup>

From what we have said it is apparent that neither Isidore nor Bede discovered anything new in the Atonement, but that they succeeded in vesting the older ideas in a somewhat newer verbal dress. Compared with their successors these two Doctors were brilliant innovators.

## II

Alcuin is satisfied with piecing together extracts from the Fathers, with which he occasionally associates the teaching of his master, St. Bede. In his commentary on the epistles to Titus and to Philemon he follows St. Jerome, whilst in commenting on *Hebrews* he gives a summary of the explanations of St. John Chrysostom. He several times states that Christ's death was a Sacrifice of expiation by which the forgiveness of sins is secured,<sup>4</sup> and that this Sacrifice was final because it was voluntary: “*Christus semel*

<sup>1</sup> PSEUD. BED. *In Psalm.* xxi.—*P.L.* xciii.; col. 591.

<sup>2</sup> *Ps.* lxviii.; *ibid.* col. 845.

<sup>3</sup> *In Marc.* xiv.—*P.L.* xcii.; col. 272. *Cp. in Luc.* lib. vi. c. xxii.; col. 597.

<sup>4</sup> ALCUIN, *Hebr.* v. 1.—*P.L.* c. 1052. *Cp.* ix. 22; col. 1075, i. 3; col. 1034, ii. 10; col. 1041, ix. 11; col. 1072 *f.*



*mortuus est pro peccatis alienis, et ideo quia voluntarie et non necessarie mortuus est.*"<sup>1</sup>

His commentary on St. John is likewise a tissue of extracts, amongst which figure the texts of Bede which we quoted above, according to which Christ was the Lamb of God, who redeems us at the price of His blood, and whose Sacrifice delivers us both from sin and from death.<sup>2</sup>

The *Collectanea* of Sedulius Scotus on St. Paul's epistles is a somewhat better work. The writer is acquainted with Origen, and even refutes him. But he seems to follow the commentaries of Pelagius, of which no doubt some copies lingered in the monasteries of Brittany, being possibly even then already ascribed, not to their real author, but to St. Jerome. Sedulius has also left us a commentary on *Hebrews*, though in this case his source is unknown whilst the work itself is worthless. In his books we find the common statements respecting Christ's work. He was made to be sin—*i.e.* a sacrifice for sin<sup>3</sup>; it was His love that gives His Sacrifice its worth and makes it agreeable to God: "*odor suavitatis charitas est.*"<sup>4</sup>

Rhabanus Maurus, a disciple of Alcuin, not only wrote his "*Praises of the Holy Cross*, two books admirable for their learning and prose and verse,"<sup>5</sup> in which we find some wonderful acrostics, and verses which read equally well, or equally bad, from left to right and from right to left; he also varied

<sup>1</sup> ALCUIN, *Hebr.* ix. 28; col. 1076. *Cp.* x. 14; col. 1079.

<sup>2</sup> *In Ioan.* lib. i. c. ii.; *ibid.* col. 756. *Cp. ibid.* lib. ii. c. v.; col. 782.

<sup>3</sup> SEDUL. SCOT. *Collect. in Rom.* viii. *P.L.* ciii. 69. *Cp.* 2 *Cor.* v.; col. 170. *Gal.* iii. 13; col. 186.

<sup>4</sup> *Eph.* v.; col. 206.

<sup>5</sup> RHABANUS MAURUS, *De laudibus Sanctæ Crucis libri duo eruditione, versu, prosaque mirifici.* *P.L.* cvii. 133 f.



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his poetical efforts by writing commentaries on St. Matthew and on St. Paul's epistles. Here he tells us quite frankly what his intentions are.

His object, he says, is to compose a compendium for the use of poor readers, and, to secure this he will take care not to go beyond the letter, or at least the sense, of his predecessors. He will also show the sources of which he makes use by marginal references, which he prays all future copyists of his work to retain. He however warns his readers that they will find in his work traces of his own labour (*proprii sudoris indicia*).<sup>1</sup> He prefaces his commentary on St. Paul with a similar declaration.<sup>2</sup> Here he confines himself to stringing together Patristic texts, though he faithfully records in the margin the names of his authors, lest the reader should be perplexed by the contradictory statements. Of any real combination we here find none, the reader is prudently left to his own efforts if he wishes to harmonise the data. In fact this work does not contain a sentence which really belongs to Rhabanus.

In this compendium we find every likely author from Origen, whose orthodox views are duly appreciated by Rhabanus, down to St. Augustine and St. Bede. When dealing with *Hebrews* our author naturally quotes his master Alcuin, but the writer who influenced him most was Ambrosiaster, whose subtle effusions he impartially records together with the same writer's more successful efforts.

<sup>1</sup> *In Matth. præf.* P.L. cvii. 727: "Ea mandare curavi quæ ab eis exposita sunt, vel ipsis eorum syllabis vel certe meis breviandi causa sermonibus."

<sup>2</sup> *In Epist. B. Pauli collectarium.* P.L. cxi. 1275 f: "In mentem suam plurima coacervans potest de singulis iudicare quid sibi utile sit inde sumere . . . Credens sobrio lectori sufficere quod in Patrum sententiis editum repererit."

The *Glossa ordinaria* of Walafried Strabo contains just as little of the personal element, but as it had a great vogue in the Middle Ages it will be of interest to see how it expounds the chief texts which refer to the Atonement.

The cause of the Atonement was the Father's love, which was matched by the Son's love.<sup>1</sup> For Christ's death was a voluntary one, and, as St. Augustine has it, is a sacrifice which destroys sin.<sup>2</sup> It also was the means of delivering us from death: "*Constat omnes mortuos fuisse in Adam, pro quibus mortuus est Christus, ut eos a morte liberaret*"<sup>3</sup>; cleansing our souls and soothing God's ire: "*Quia nostra emundatio et Dei propitiatio nobis sine sanguine nulla est.*"<sup>4</sup>

This same death was also the penalty of our sins: "*Multa patitur, quantum ad se gratis; sed quod alius rapuit ipse solvit.*"<sup>5</sup> "*Pœnam alienæ iniquitatis suscipit, qui nihil dignum passione egit.*"<sup>6</sup>

Strabo even has it that, seeing the grievousness of our sin, Christ's death was necessary for our Salvation: "*Tantum fuit peccatum nostrum ut salvari non possemus nisi Unigenitus Dei pro nobis moreretur, debitoribus mortis.*"<sup>7</sup>

This last text, which other glossaries attribute to

<sup>1</sup> *Cp. Ioan. iii. 15.—P.L. cxiv. ; col. 368 and ibid. x. 15 ; col. 397.*

<sup>2</sup> "*Morte sua, uno quippe verissimo sacrificio pro nobis oblato, quidquid culparum erat . . . exstinxit.*" Or more briefly: "*Dum innocens occiditur, peccatum crucifigitur.*" *Col. ii. 14-15 ; col. 612. Cp. Matth. xxvi. 26 ; col. 169.*

<sup>3</sup> *2 Cor. v. 14 ; col. 558.*

<sup>4</sup> *Hebr. ix. 22 ; col. 659.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ps. lxviii. 1.—P.L. cxiii. ; col. 946.*

<sup>6</sup> *Marc. xiv. 23.—P.L. cxiv. ; col. 231. Cp. Luc. xxii. 17 ; ibid. col. 338.*

<sup>7</sup> *Hebr. ix. 14 ; col. 659. Cp. Gal. i. 4 ; col. 571 : "Non erat alia hostia digna pro peccatis nostris delendis."*

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St. John Chrysostom, and which is, in fact, an adaptation of his words, was to be frequently quoted in the Middle Ages. It was this text which prepared the way for that more accurate examination of the nature of sin whence will come the doctrine of Satisfaction. In fact this obscure glossator, though he is the merest echo of the Catholic tradition, is in some sense a precursor of St. Anselm.

### III

The commentaries of Haymo, Bishop of Halberstadt, betray slightly more individuality. This writer did not merely piece together extracts from the Fathers, he digested them to some extent and combined them. His work is more than a compilation, it is a digest. Haymo's main object is to make the literal meaning clear, and, to secure this, he seeks the Greek, and even occasionally the Hebrew, text. His homilies are really running commentaries on the Gospel of the day, in which moral conclusions are drawn but rarely.

He looks on Christ's death as a Sacrifice; as a faithful follower of Ambrosiaster and St. Augustine he always expounds in this way St. Paul's text: "*Peccatum fecit esse pro nobis.*"<sup>1</sup> This one sacrifice, unlike the many sacrifices of the Old Law, was of itself sufficient for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>2</sup> It reconciles us with God by appeasing God's righteous

<sup>1</sup> HAYMO HALB. *Rom.* viii. *P.L.* cxvii. 427. *Cp.* 2 *Cor.* v.; col. 631. *Gal.* iii.; col. 680.

<sup>2</sup> *Cp.* *Hebr.* vii.; col. 872. *Ibid.* ix.; col. 885, and x.; col. 888-9. Haymo also says that this Sacrifice acquires its price from the love it reveals: "*Odorem suavitatis debemus intelligere intentionem bonæ voluntatis et affectum mentis, quibus Deus delectatur.*" *Eph.* v.; col. 724.



anger against us: "*Filium suum proposuit Deus Pater propitiatorem et reconciliatorem, ut ipse nobis propitium faceret Deum Patrem et placabilem per fidem passionis suæ.*"<sup>1</sup>

Haymo also ascribes to Christ's death a certain penal character: "*Delicta dixit sua, non quod ipse fecisset, sed pro eis portavit pœnam.*"<sup>2</sup> "*Flagellum quod debuimus suscipere ipse suscepit, ut nos pacificaret Deo,*"<sup>3</sup> and, according to the Augustinian principle, His undeserved death was the death of our death.<sup>4</sup>

This is not all; having regard to the enormity of sin, Christ's death was required, to save us. Haymo repeats the text which we met a short time back in the *Glossa ordinaria*; <sup>5</sup> in another passage he says: "*Nisi ipse crucis patibulum sustinuisset, genus humanum æterna morte teneretur obnoxium.*" But, all the same, this plan depended wholly on God's free choice.<sup>6</sup>

The ninth-century writers who came after Haymo furnish nothing new. Florus, a deacon of the Church of Lyons, wrote a commentary on St. Paul's epistles which is, however, a mere congeries of texts from St. Augustine.<sup>7</sup> Paschasius Radbertus is another such compiler. He expresses his hope that he has not erred from the teaching of his predecessors, and that, if he has added aught it will be found to agree with

<sup>1</sup> *Rom.* iii. ; col. 392. *Cp.* *Eph.* ii. ; col. 710 and *Ps.* xlviii.—*P.L.* cxvi. ; col. 362.

<sup>2</sup> *Ps.* xxi. ; *ibid.* col. 263. *Cp.* *Ps.* lxxviii. ; col. 423.

<sup>3</sup> *In Is.* liii. ; *ibid.* col. 989.

<sup>4</sup> *Hebr.* ix.—*P.L.* cxvii. ; col. 884. *Cp.* *Gal.* iii. ; *ibid.* col. 680. It is in this wise that Haymo expounds all the texts which speak of our redemption. *Rom.* iii. ; col. 392. *Cp.* *Eph.* i. ; col. 703.

<sup>5</sup> *Hebr.* ix. ; *ibid.* col. 884.

<sup>6</sup> *In Is.* liii.—*P.L.* cxvi. ; col. 990 and 992.

<sup>7</sup> *FLOR.* *Com. in epist. B. Pauli.*—*P.L.* cxix. (a work long attributed to St. Bede).



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the doctrine of his masters. Like Rhabanus Maurus, he quotes in the margin the authors of whom he makes use.<sup>1</sup> According to him our Saviour's cross is useful and even necessary for on it was offered God's own chosen expiation for the sins of the whole world."<sup>2</sup>

The only independent mind of the period, John Scot Eriugena, was also the only one to sound a less accustomed note. He sings in Greek and Latin verse the glories of the cross,<sup>3</sup> and states that Christ offered Himself in sacrifice on the cross for the Salvation of the whole world and that so great was the worth of His Sacrifice, that God demands no more expiation of our sins.<sup>4</sup> But what is more, he follows in the footsteps of the Greek Fathers and seeks the sublimest ends of the Incarnation. This mystery makes us gods, snatching us from corruption and death. Christ being the head of mankind, all mankind is healed in Him.<sup>5</sup> John Scot is fond of such general views, but he clearly connects the restoration of fallen mankind with the Sacrifice offered on the cross. Death is the ultimate consequence of sin and the destruction of death is the ultimate result of Christ's sacrifice.<sup>6</sup> In Scot's system the restoration of mankind is only the final outcome of the realism of the Atonement.

<sup>1</sup> PASCH. RADBERT. *In Matth. prologus*.—P.L. cxx.; col. 35. "Quorum adhærens vestigiis, ab eorum sensibus credo me in nullo deviasse. . . . Nisi quod aut præfati dixerint aut veritas hinc inde consonat documento."

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* lib. viii. cap. xvi.; col. 567 f.

<sup>3</sup> JOAN. SCOT. *Versus*.—P.L. cxxii. 1221-6. Cp. 1240.

<sup>4</sup> *De divis. nat.* v. 36; col. 981. Cp. *ibid.* 38; col. 1007-8.

<sup>5</sup> *Hom. in prol. Ioan.* col. 295-6. Cp. *De divis nat.* v. 23; col. 899 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *In Ioan.* fragm. 1; col. 310-313. Cp. fragm. ii.; col. 320. *Versus*, ii. 58-60; col. 1225

From this we glean that Scot Eriugena's soteriological doctrine was not only not spoilt by its author's heterodoxy on other subjects, but that on the contrary we find in it a power and grandeur such as we cannot discover in the doctrine of any of his contemporaries. But though John Scot was alone in exploring the higher regions of our doctrine, it remains that the ninth century, with all its lack of novelty, continued to repeat faithfully the doctrine of the earlier ages.

## IV

We can scarcely say as much of the tenth century, which has been rightly called the "dark century"; of this age we can only quote Atto of Vercelli's commentary on St. Paul, a work which follows faithfully St. Augustine.

Christ's death was a Sacrifice which wipes out our sins, differing in this from the useless sacrifices of the olden dispensation, and which appeases God's wrath and reconciles us with Him.<sup>1</sup> Because His death was undeserved it destroyed our death.<sup>2</sup> Atto even has it that Christ's Sacrifice was the only one which could effect this object, and to explain this he borrows St. Gregory's text respecting the philosophy of sacrifice.<sup>3</sup>

With regard to the eleventh century we find another more original commentary on St. Paul, ascribed to St. Bruno. This commentary sums up exceedingly well in a single sentence the double character of Christ's death: "*Mortuus est iustus pro impiis: vel*

<sup>1</sup> ATTO VERCELL. *Rom.* iii.—*P.L.* cxxxiv.; col. 162. *Cp.* viii.; col. 198. *Col.* i.; col. 616. *Hebr.* v.; col. 755 and ix.; col. 779-780.

<sup>2</sup> *Gal.* iii.; col. 518.

<sup>3</sup> *Hebr.* ix.; col. 782-783.

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*vice impiorum quia impii mori deberent pro peccato suo, vel causa impiorum redimendorum.*"<sup>1</sup> Our Saviour thus underwent the penalty of our sins: "*Peccatum factus est Christus secundum pœnam peccati quam pertulit.*"<sup>2</sup>

In consequence of this Christ's death was a sacrifice which both reconciles us to God and forgives our sins. Bruno even adds that any other sacrifice was bound to be insufficient: "*Christus dedit semetipsum non aliud sacrificium, quia nihil præter eum sufficeret,*"<sup>3</sup> but as he often puts it, Christ gave a redemption sufficient for all.<sup>4</sup>

Towards the end of the eleventh century we find the well-stocked and well-worded homilies of Radulfus Ardens. This writer does not simply repeat the usual sayings about Christ's death freeing us from death, expiating our sins and reconciling us with God.<sup>5</sup> He lays stress also on the moral work of our Saviour, which shows forth His love and sets us an example.<sup>6</sup> Radulfus even attempts to classify these different benefits; he devotes a whole homily to the texts from St. Peter (1 *Pet.* ii.), and asks himself the following questions:—"Quis passus est, et pro quibus, et quanta, et in quo, et quo modo, et qua nostra utilitate?" His answers are usually as good as his questions, and in dealing with the last question he distinguishes four

<sup>1</sup> BRUN. *Rom.* v.—*P.L.* cliii. ; col. 50-51.

<sup>2</sup> 2 *Cor.* v. ; *ibid.* col. 244. *Cp.* *Gal.* iii. ; col. 296. *Ps.* lxviii.—*P.L.* clii. ; col. 970.

<sup>3</sup> *Gal.* i. ; col. 283. *Cp.* *Rom.* v. ; col. 53. "Vere solus Christus sufficiens fuit ad iustificationem omnium."

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* col. 54. *Cp.* *Eph.* i. ; col. 320. 1 *Tim.* ii. ; col. 437. *Hebr.* vii. ; col. 527, etc.

<sup>5</sup> RAD. ARD. *Hom.* ix. in *Domin.*—*P.L.* clv. ; col. 1697-8. *Cp.* *Hom.* xliii. ; col. 1821 and *Hom.* xxi. de *Sanctis* ; col. 1568.

<sup>6</sup> *Hom.* xvi. de *Temp.* col. 1358. *Cp.* *Hom.* xxix. ; col. 1804.



kinds of utility inherent in Christ's death : the bearing of our sins, the showing forth of His love, the example, and our release from the devil and restoration to God.<sup>1</sup> He also states that Christ offered a Sacrifice which sufficed for the reconciliation of all men.<sup>2</sup>

So far all our author's expressions are derived from tradition. But further examination reveals something new, for Radulfus is the first to make use of the idea and word "satisfaction," a term which was afterwards to play so great a part in the theology of the Atonement. In a homily, of which the theme is similar to that which we have just quoted, our author reckons up the benefits which accrue through Christ's incarnation, and he finds four : the example set, the love shown, the satisfaction rendered for the fault of our first parent, and the healing of man's pride by God's humility :

"Tertia causa est ut de prima prævaricatione satisfaceret. Illa autem prævaricatio fuit superbia tanta, ut se elevaret mente homo usque ad æqualitatem Dei. Cum vero contraria contrariis curentur, oportuit ut ad satisfactionem illius superbix aliquis homo humiliaretur ab altitudine divinitatis usque ad humilitatem hominis. Hoc autem nemo potuit facere nisi esset Deus et homo. Propterea Deus factus est homo."<sup>3</sup>

This is the first occasion of this term being used to describe the Atonement. It is true that Radulfus does not apply it to Christ's death but his view serves as a transition to that of St. Anselm.

Hence from the seventh to the eleventh century the theology of the Atonement made little progress, but the compilers of those times succeeded in treasuring up its elements.

<sup>1</sup> *Hom.* lvi. de *Dom.* col. 1870-2. Cp. *Hom. in Dom.* pars II<sup>a</sup>, hom. xxiv. ; col. 2028.

<sup>2</sup> *Hom. de Sanct.* xxv. ; col. 1589. Cp. in *Dom.* hom. li. ; col. 1850.

<sup>3</sup> In *Dom.* pars I<sup>a</sup>, hom. x. ; col. 1700-1.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE DOCTRINE OF SATISFACTION—ST. ANSELM'S SYSTEM

THANKS to the work of commentators and glossators, who were content to play the useful though inglorious part of channels of communication, the Middle Ages never quite lost contact with ancient thought. But though the doctrine of the Atonement was not a loser by the dark ages so neither did it gain. At the beginning of the Middle Ages theologians were yet on the surface of the mystery, but the time was fast approaching when superficial explanations would no longer reign supreme.

St. Anselm, who has so many claims to be called the first of the Schoolmen, was the creator of the new theology on the Atonement. Protestants and Catholics all agree that his *Cur Deus Homo* was "an epoch-making work,"<sup>1</sup> and they are right. Not only is this work the first real treatise on the Atonement, it is also here that we find for the first time distinctly formulated that theory of Satisfaction, in the light of which the foundations of the doctrine will be explored, and which will soon become the classical theory of theology on this matter. Anselm's work, which is a masterpiece by reason both of its influence and originality, gained its author a place among the ranks of the best of the Fathers, and even to-day it remains, on account of its ideas and of the form in which they are cast, the strongest if not

<sup>1</sup> Cp. GRÉTILLAT, *op. cit.* iv. pp. 283-284. SCHWANE, *op. cit.* iv. p. 466. DÖERHOLT, *op. cit.* p. 137.



the most perfect production which Christian literature has brought forth concerning the mystery of the Atonement.

## I

What we did for the syntheses of Athanasius and Gregory of Nyssa we shall do for St. Anselm. We must first inspect the work, which, in the case of such a book as this, means that we must summarise it more or less in the actual form in which it was cast by the author.

The title of the work shows its scope; the matter it discusses is the wherefore of God's becoming man (*Cur Deus Homo*).<sup>1</sup> In a brief preface Anselm tells us his method: he intends "to set Christ aside as though He had never been, and then prove by logical arguments that it is impossible for any man to be saved without Him," and that all Faith teaches us had necessarily to come to pass.<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact Anselm quotes no Father in the course of his treatise, nor does he touch on Scripture save to waive certain objections. His work is thus altogether speculative. He himself expresses his guiding principle as follows:—

"Sicut in Deo quamlibet parvum inconueniens sequitur impossibilitas, ita quamlibet parvam rationem, si maiori non vincitur, comitatur necessitas."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See the book in *P.L.* clviii. 361-430. [An English translation is published by Griffith, Farran, Browne & Co., London.]

<sup>2</sup> "Remoto Christo, quasi nunquam aliquid fuerit de illo, probat rationibus necessariis esse impossibile ullum hominem saluari sine illo. . . . Quasi nihil sciatur de Christo, monstratur . . . ex necessitate omnia quæ de Christo quærimus fieri oportere." *Præf. loc. cit.* col. 361-362. *Cp.* i. 20; col. 393.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* i. 10; col. 375.

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And in reality his treatise proceeds from one inference to another with merciless logic.

The fact that the treatise is couched in the form of a dialogue gives the saint's argument a liveliness which would scarcely be expected in a work of this nature. Anselm discusses the subject with his disciple Boso, whom he forces little by little to adopt his system. At times, indeed, Boso seems to be a merely conventional questioner, a friend who asks a convenient question at the right moment, and who enables the principal speaker to effect easily his transitions; sometimes he refuses to understand only in order that the saint may explain and prove his point more fully, whereas at other times, when a point is really debatable, the questioner expresses his entire agreement. Nevertheless, there are repartees to be found in the course of the dialogue which show that Boso was no mere dummy, but a living man, and a kind of scholastic Socrates. At any rate, Anselm has composed his work with sufficient skill, and combined the variety and attractiveness of the dialogue with the strictest canons of reasoning.

The dialogue consists of two books, the first of which is devoted to establishing the need of Satisfaction for sin and man's powerlessness to give it.

After letting it be known that he presupposes the Faith and wishes only to justify it by reason, and after having, with touching humility, excused himself for dealing with so profound a mystery (c. i.-ii.), Anselm proceeds to work. Boso, first of all, exposes the objections of unbelievers. Why did God become man, and why did He, in order to save us, suffer all sorts of humiliations? Anselm gives the customary reply in answer: God thereby showed

His love and compassion; it was needful that, as by the disobedience of man, death had come upon the human race, so by the obedience of man life should be restored; as sin had had its beginning from a woman it was needful that the author of our justification should be born of a woman; as the devil had vanquished man by the fruit of the tree so was it meet that he should be conquered by a Man by the death He bore on the tree. Here we recognise the explanations of the Fathers. But Boso objects that all these sayings are but floating metaphors, and that they are all devoid of solid foundation. This solid foundation is what Anselm will set out to seek (c. iii.-iv.).

But first of all our saint devotes several chapters to a desultory consideration of various objections; this was his way of clearing the ground. Boso asks why man should not be saved by an angel? Because thereby man, who had been created for God, would come to belong to a creature. Again, why did not God save us by a mere act of His will? If you say He could not, you deny His omnipotence, if you say He would not, you deny His wisdom. We are told that God redeemed us from sin, hell, and the devil, but do not all these wholly depend on God's will? We are also told that God by the Incarnation wished to manifest His love; but could He not have done so otherwise? Does He not then show His love to the good angels without enduring things such as He endured on earth? And have we any right whatever to speak of the devil in connection with the Incarnation? For what real rights had the devil over mankind? In such wise does Anselm use Boso as an instrument with which to discreetly criticise the explanations of the Incarnation then prevalent. His



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only answer to the very pointed objections of his disciple is conveyed in the evasive words: "The will of God ought to be a sufficient reason for us when He does anything, even though we do not see why He wills thus, for the will of God is never unreasonable" (c. v.-viii.).

Boso goes on to raise another difficulty. Is it not contrary to reason that the Highest should stoop to such indignities and sufferings? Anselm answers by distinguishing between the two natures and by saying that God in His impassible nature suffers naught. —But again, is it not wrong that the righteous should suffer for the unrighteous? It is all very well to say that Christ willed to die, but Scripture only speaks of Christ's obedience to a commandment. Anselm examines this objection at length. He opines that no commandment, properly so called, was laid on Christ that He should die. God willed and ordained His death only indirectly, by laying on Him a command to do something by which He incurred death, and this mission was moreover accepted by Christ of His own free will. Or again, we may say that God willed the death of Christ because He prompted His Son so to do and did nothing to set Him free; our author then quotes all the biblical texts which speak of Christ's freedom, dealing with the question according to a method to be afterwards adopted by St. Thomas (c. viii.-x.).

But Boso returns to his point. It was not fitting that the Father should permit His Son to be treated so unworthily. Nor is it clear how Christ's death saves mankind. This question serves Anselm as a bridge by which to pass over to the discussion of the graver aspects of the problem. He begins by laying down certain principles. Man was made for blessed-

ness, but this man cannot attain except by being free from sin, which, however, he cannot escape committing in his passage through the world. Hence the forgiveness of sins is a prior condition to attaining blessedness. St. Anselm's task is therefore to investigate the nature of sin and the conditions of its forgiveness.

Sin, he argues, is the refusal to render to God what is due, and God's due is that submission and obedience which we as creatures owe to God. Whosoever renders not unto God this due honour takes away from God that which is His, and dishonours God, and this is sin :

"Omnis voluntas rationalis creaturæ subiecta debet esse voluntati Dei. . . . Hunc honorem debitum qui Deo non reddit aufert Deo quod suum est et Deum exhonorat, et hoc est peccare." <sup>1</sup>

We might easily show, were we dealing with this matter, how grand this conception of sin really is, but the reader will have noticed that the legal aspect of injustice which is ascribed to it by St. Anselm is merely an explicitation of, and an insistence on, its moral aspect, that namely of disobedience. We must also point out that, whereas the Fathers usually confine themselves to describing the results of sin, St. Anselm seeks its nature and finds it to be an offence against God.

To secure forgiveness, the sin must needs be repaired ; but for it to be repaired we must first restore that to God of which we have deprived Him, and yet more, in order to make compensation for the outrage we have committed against Him. This is what is called making satisfaction :

"Nec sufficit solummodo reddere quod ablatum est, sed pro contumelia illata plus debet reddere quam abstulit. . . . Sic ergo debet omnis qui peccat honorem quem rapuit Deo solvere ; et hæc est satisfactio." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *C. D. H.* i. 11 ; col. 376

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* col. 376-7.



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Moreover, sin being a moral damage and an act of disobedience, the ensuing satisfaction must also have a moral character, and be an act of homage and of submission (c. xi.).

Such satisfaction is necessary. St. Anselm adduces many arguments to prove this. It would not be seem God to forgive out of His mercy, and to exact no satisfaction, for this would be to allow sin to go unpunished; God cannot allow such disorder in His kingdom. Moreover this would result in the just and the sinner being placed on the same footing. Nevertheless God commands us to forgive those that sin against us, being unwilling that we should exercise that right of vengeance which belongs to Him alone. Some indeed appeal to God's freedom and goodness, but neither the one nor the other can come into conflict with His dignity. God owes it to Himself that the creature should give him the homage due, otherwise His own honour would suffer (c. xii.-xiii.). Whence it follows that either the honour abstracted shall be restored or punishment shall follow: "*Necesse est ergo aut ut ablati honor solvatur, aut poena sequatur.*"<sup>1</sup>

But how does the punishment of the sinner preserve God's honour? Anselm answers this question in a digression which will help us to understand both the nature of sin and the meaning of Satisfaction.

It is impossible that God should abandon His honour and its rights. Hence of two things one: either man will spontaneously yield submission to God, or God will subject him unwillingly and by compulsion. Submission to God may be manifested either by abstaining from sin or by making satisfaction for it; short of this, God will exact His due by

<sup>1</sup> C. D. H. i. 13; col. 379.

force. St. Anselm elsewhere remarks that this honour of God's is not His intrinsic honour, which cannot be diminished, inasmuch as it pertains to Himself, and can neither be increased by Satisfaction nor diminished by sin. The honour which is affected is that external honour which is shown by the due subjection of creatures, by each one following out his allotted course and preserving his place in the order of creation. This order is disturbed by sin, but sin does not on this account lie outside of God's jurisdiction. Anselm explains his mind by means of an ingenious comparison. If some fine day the stars were to conceive the wish of leaving their places they would find it impossible to escape from some definite position in the sky. So is it with man, for when he tries to flee from under that Will which commands, he rushes headlong under that Will which punishes. Hence all sin must necessarily be followed either by satisfaction or by penalty (c. xiv.-xv.):

*"Ipsa namque perversitatis spontanea satisfactio vel a non satisfaciente pœnæ exactio in eadem universitate locum tenent suum et ordinis pulchritudinem. . . . Necesse est ut omne peccatum satisfactio aut pœna sequatur."*<sup>1</sup>

All this belongs to the purest and the best of Christian metaphysics and even now it is easier to make fun of than to controvert the principles laid down.

Satisfaction is likewise necessary to preserve the Divine plan, according to which men were made to replace the fallen angels (c. xvi.-xviii.). Lastly, it is necessary for man's own happiness. A rich man holds in his hand a priceless pearl, which he intends to lay up among his treasure. An envious person jerks it out of his hand into the mud. Would the

<sup>1</sup> C. D. H. i. 15; col. 380-1.

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rich man pick up the bespattered jewel and put it into his treasure without first cleansing it? So neither would it befit God to bring into heaven an unclean soul, and indeed man himself would thereby lose half his happiness (c. xix.).

But man was unable to furnish the satisfaction which has been shown to be necessary. The principle is that the Satisfaction must be proportionate to the sin: "*Hoc quoque non dubitabis, ut puto, quia secundum mensuram peccati oportet satisfactionem esse.*"<sup>1</sup> Otherwise the sin would remain in some measure unrequited. With this Boso agrees without demur. We should be less easily satisfied, and would fain learn Anselm's reasons for the proposition which he uses as his major premise.

But what can we offer to God as a satisfaction for our sins? Boso reckons up penance, contrition, humility, fasting, bodily labour, almsdeeds, forgiveness of injuries, obedience. Anselm replies that all these things were already owing to God. What then have we to give Him? Boso now begins to grow alarmed at his teacher's dialectics, and confesses that he is somewhat perplexed (*quamvis in angustias quasdam me ducas*), but he declares himself satisfied with Anselm's principles (c. xx.). For our part, however, we must decline to accept them, for, though obedience and humility are ever due to God, the other actions enumerated by Boso are free and supererogatory. Anselm's mystical reasons do not avail to prove the contrary.<sup>2</sup>

Anselm adduces a second and better argument taken from the infinite grievousness of sin. Even

<sup>1</sup> *C. D. H.* i. 20; col. 392.

<sup>2</sup> This is also BAINVEL's view. *Dict. théol. cath.* art *Anselme*, col. 1346.



supposing all our good actions were not already owed to God, they would still be insufficient to repair even the smallest sin. And when Boso expresses his wonder, he is told to enter more deeply into the meaning of sin: "*Nondum considerasti quanti ponderis sit peccatum.*"<sup>1</sup> So great is the evil of sin that it would be wrong to commit one sin even to save the whole of mankind and the world from ruin. The enormity of sin results from the greatness of Him against whom it is an offence; now, God demands a proportionate satisfaction for sin (c. xxi.). St. Anselm considers this proven, but we have our doubts, for we cannot see why God could not have contented Himself with a partial satisfaction, and why repentance—of which Anselm says nothing—could not have been sufficient, had it so pleased God, to wash away the sinner's stains.

Anselm also brings forward other arguments, of a different order. Man, by allowing himself to be vanquished by Satan, dishonoured God, of whose rights he was then the champion. To restore to God His ravished honour he would have to vanquish the devil, a thing which he is in no wise able to do. By suffering defeat, man has lost to God his whole race, and justice requires that he should again restore it, and this he cannot, because no sinner is able to justify another.<sup>2</sup>

Nor must it be forgotten that man is to blame for not furnishing the Satisfaction, because it was by his fault that he lost the power of making it. It is no

<sup>1</sup> C. D. H. i. 21; col. 393.

<sup>2</sup> We have already seen that several of the Fathers use arguments such as these. This proves that St. Anselm, in spite of the originality of his work, depended to a large extent on Patristic tradition.



good to plead God's mercy, for He could only dispense either from Satisfaction or from the penalty. Were He to remit our Satisfaction He would be remitting that which He cannot get, and to ascribe to God such mercy as this is the merest mockery. If, on the other hand, He remits the penalty on account of our powerlessness to make satisfaction, then, as this powerlessness is a result of our sin, God would be making man blessed on account of his guilt. Moreover, any forgiveness of this kind is excluded by man. For man may be conceived of as either willing or unwilling to make satisfaction to God. If unwilling, then he is doubly guilty, if willing and yet unable then he is insolvent; in either case there is a bar to his blessedness.

"But," exclaims the scandalised Boso, "God's mercy then seems to vanish entirely." "You asked for a logical proof," retorts Anselm, "and you must take it." "*Rationem postulasti, rationem accipe.*" Boso is at last forced to concede that if God follows the logic of justice there is no way by which man can escape: "*Ego utique nullam tuarum rationum aliquatenus infirmari posse valeo [video]*" (c. xxiv.).

Hence, outside of the Christian faith, and of Christ the Redeemer, mankind cannot be saved. We must admit Salvation by Christ even though we be not sure how it was effected. It is necessary that some human beings should attain to blessedness, otherwise God would seem either to repent of what He has done, or to be unable to carry out His first intentions (c. xxv.). This last consideration forms the transition to the second book, in which Anselm investigates the necessity and efficacy of the Satisfaction of the God-man.

After dealing with some preliminaries, which have

no evident bearing on his subject (c. i.-iii.), Anselm proceeds to prove that it was necessary that God should redeem us. The reason he gives us is that God must carry out that which He has designed, otherwise He will have created human nature in vain; it would be unlike God to allow so precious a nature to perish utterly. Boso immediately proposes the objection that if God is obliged to avoid inconsistency it would seem that He saves us more for His sake than for ours. But if He saved us on His own account what gratitude do we owe him? Anselm answers that there is a necessity which increases the need of gratitude—namely, when the necessity is willingly submitted to—he instances the case of promises and vows. Now God in creating man foresaw his fall, hence when He created him He bound Himself to complete the work which He had begun and restore him in due season: “*Sponte se ut perficeret inceptum bonum quasi-obligavit.*” We must be careful to avoid attributing absolute necessity to God. His necessity is in truth nothing else than the immutability of His honour and of His designs. God was not obliged to create us. If He did so it was out of His goodness; but His goodness owes it to itself to effect its ends. In other words, God is obliged, if indeed not necessitated, to effect the Atonement (c. iv.-v.).<sup>1</sup>

But, to save us, complete Satisfaction was needed, and to secure this, as we have already seen, it was necessary to give to God something which would surpass all that is below God; now nothing exists above all that is not God, save God, therefore God

<sup>1</sup> “Necesse est ut bonitas Dei propter immutabilitatem suam perficiat de homine quod incepit; quamvis totum sit gratia bonum quod facit.” *C. D. H.* ii. 5; col. 403.

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alone could make this Satisfaction ; but on the other hand this Satisfaction was required from man, therefore what was needed was one who should be both God and man :

“Si ergo necesse est ut de hominibus perficiatur illa superna civitas, nec hoc esse valet nisi fiat prædicta satisfactio, quam nec potest facere nisi Deus, nec debet nisi homo, necesse est ut eam faciat Deus-Homo.”<sup>1</sup>

Boso, delighted with this conclusion, cannot contain his joy : “*Benedictus Deus ! iam magnum quiddam invenimus*” (c. vi.).

St. Anselm uses a like reasoning to show that the Redeemer must be at once perfect God and perfect Man, which can only come about by the two natures being united in a single person. He then goes on to show that this man must be of the race of Adam, and the child of a Virgin ; and that, as the whole Trinity could not become incarnate, it was fitting that the Word should take flesh (c. vii.-ix.). Boso is forced to grant that Anselm guards his position so cleverly that he cannot get away from the same conclusion :

“Sic est via qua me ducis undique munita ratione, ut neque ad dexteram neque ad sinistram videam me ab illa posse declinare.”

After having in this wise justified the Incarnation, Anselm goes on to explain the work of the Incarnate Word. This Man deserved not to die because He was without sin. Boso objects that Christ might have sinned, for instance He might have said of the Father : “I know Him not.” Anselm answers that He had indeed this power, but that the will so to act was wanting. The discussion then assumes a more speculative character. If this Man was un-

<sup>1</sup> C. D. H. ii. 6 ; col. 404.



able to sin, then He remained upright of necessity ; what reward would then be due to Him for His righteousness ? Anselm answers by examining the meaning of the word merit, and comes to the conclusion that His merit consists in His having righteousness from Himself. That is why the God-man, who derived everything from Himself—*i.e.* from His Divine Person—has infinite merit (c. x.). In this we already catch a glimpse of St. Anselm's tendency to look at the Divine side of Christ to the exclusion of His human will.

Hence the God-man, not being a sinner, was not subject to death ; how then can we explain His death ? Simply by means of His omnipotence. If He could not die He would not be Almighty. Hence He was able to lay down His life of His own accord, or allow Himself to be put to death. His death, in this wise, will furnish just that act of supreme homage which was required for the Satisfaction of sin. All the acts of obedience which He performed during His life He owed to God, as any other creature, but His death was a work of supererogation. His death was also most befitting because it was the greatest act of love ever given to God. His death not only made satisfaction for our sins, it had other results—such as the force of its example (c. xi.-xiii.). Lastly, His death had an infinite value, hence it exceeds in value the many and great sins of mankind.<sup>1</sup> Anselm sums up his long argument in this single clause :

“Ecce iam vides quo modo rationabilis necessitas ostendat ex hominibus perficiendam esse supernam civitatem, nec hoc posse

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<sup>1</sup> “Putasne bonum tam amabile posse sufficere ad solvendum quod debetur pro peccatis totius mundi ? Immo, plus potest in infinitum.”  
C. D. H. ii. 14 ; col. 415.



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fieri nisi per remissionem peccatorum, quam homo nullus habere potest nisi per hominem qui idem ipse sit Deus atque sua morte homines peccatores Deo reconciliet." <sup>1</sup>

Boso, to show that he has rightly grasped his master's thought, repeats in his turn the lesson :

"Summa quæstionis fuit cur Deus homo factus sit ut per mortem suam salvaret homines. . . . Ad quam tu *multis et necessariis rationibus* respondens, ostendisti restaurationem humanæ naturæ non debuisse remanere; nec potuisse fieri nisi solveret homo quod pro peccato Deo debebat. Quod debitum tantum erat ut illud, cum non deberet solvere nisi homo, non posset nisi Deus; ita ut idem esset homo qui et Deus. Unde necesse erat ut Deus assumeret hominem in unitatem personæ. . . . Vitam autem huius hominis tam sublimem, tam speciosam apertissime probasti, ut sufficere possit ad solvendum quod pro peccatis totius mundi debeter, et plus in infinitum." <sup>2</sup>

We have yet to learn how Christ's satisfaction is applied to us. Anselm reminds his hearer that Christ, by His faithfulness to His mission even unto death, gave His life for God's honour, and that this act was free and supererogatory, and consequently meritorious. In justice, God was bound to requite such an act of generosity. Now Christ could merit nothing for Himself; He had no debt to pay, and all His Father's goods belonged to Him. But He could pass on His merits to others, and if the Son requested this the Father could not refuse; and on whom could He more fitly bestow these merits than on us, His brethren in the flesh (c. xix., xx.)? <sup>3</sup> St. Anselm

<sup>1</sup> *C. D. H.* ii. 15; col. 416.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 18; col. 425.

<sup>3</sup> It will be noticed that St. Anselm—in this passage at least—posits, between Christ's merits and mankind which He saves, a merely outward and legal relationship, instituted, as it were, casually, by a special and accidental decree of God. This is perhaps the weakest point in Anselm's system; farther on we shall propose a truer conception.

concludes by saying that God stood in no need of doing all this, but that the "immutable verity" required it, and that God thereby showed His great mercy.

## II

The *Cur Deus Homo* has this advantage, that it represents in systematic form the fundamental ideas of St. Anselm, but, as Ritschl remarks,<sup>1</sup> we must not seek his whole thought here; his other writings reveal it under other aspects, and in some way correct it.

Anselm resumes his consideration of the Atonement in one of his meditations; after having set aside the fiction of the devil's rights he comes to the subject, and deals with it according to the principles of the *Cur Deus Homo*, but with less logical rigour and stiffness.

The Incarnation, he states, had no other cause than the Divine Will, and the only law of this Will is goodness:

"An aliqua necessitas coegit ut Altissimus sic se humiliaret? . . . Sed omnis necessitas eius subiacet voluntati. . . . *Sola ergo voluntate, et, quoniam voluntas eius semper bona est, sola fecit hoc bonitate.*"

Man could only attain to blessedness by obtaining the forgiveness of his sins, and this could only be reached through entire Satisfaction: "*Peccatorem remissio non fit nisi præcedente integra satisfactione.*" As he could not furnish such Satisfaction, which nevertheless was absolutely required, Divine goodness came to his rescue:

"Quod quoniam humana natura sola non habebat, nec sine debita satisfactione reconciliari poterat . . . , subvenit bonitas Dei."

The Death of the God-man, because it was un-

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 46-47.

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deserved and voluntary, repaid abundantly the debt we had contracted.

But between our Saviour and ourselves there is something more than that merely legal and outward relationship alluded to by the *Cur Deus Homo* ; there is also a real identity, for in Christ it was our own human nature which furnished Satisfaction :

“ *Dedit humana natura Deo in illo homine sponte et non ex debito quod suum erat, ut redimeret se in aliis, in quibus quod ex debito exigebatur reddere non habebat.*”<sup>1</sup>

In this manner St. Anselm contrived to lessen somewhat the rigidity of his dialectics, in order to make room for the conception of Divine goodness. In another meditation he enlarges yet more on the same theme.<sup>2</sup>

Anselm depicts the state of the sinner who has offended God and dealt a blow at the whole order of nature, and who now stands trembling before God's justice, but who picks up courage by recalling God's mercy, which still continues to overwhelm him with its benefits : “ *Peccata mea non possunt eius bonitatem vincere.*” God showed His mercy when, instead of punishing Adam immediately, He allowed him time to repent. This kindness He has continued to manifest towards Adam's descendants. He sent them His angels to warn them, but they plunged ever deeper into the slough of sin. He sent them the patriarchs and the prophets, and they heeded them not. Even the chastisements which from time to time He inflicted on them were merely the corrections of a loving Father. But all was to no purpose. Then the Divine goodness could no longer restrain itself (*non se potuit fons pietatis ultra retinere*), and

<sup>1</sup> *Medit. xi. ; ibid. col. 764-766.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid. vi. ; col. 736-738.*



the Son of God Himself deigned to assume our manhood that He might restore hope to us and preach penance. To this end he carried His love so far as to die for us in order to redeem us by His blood and thereby snatch us from despair.

In another passage Anselm shows how our Saviour underwent the chastisement of our sins, and, in words full of feeling, describes the mystery of substitution : "He who had done no sin bore our sins and healed our wounds by His sufferings. . . . Didst thou, O Lord, not strike Him, though He was Thy Son, in order to redeem the servant?" He proceeds with the following prayer :—

"Conspicare Dei hominis pœnam et relaxa conditi hominis miseriam. Vide Redemptoris supplicium et redempti dimitte delictum. Hic est quem propter peccata populi tui percussisti, licet ipse sit dilectus. . . ."

St. Anselm now gives full vent to his emotion :

"O mirabilis censuræ condicio ! et ineffabilis mysterii dispositio ! Peccat iniquus et punitur iustus ; deliquit reus et vapulat innocens ; offendit impius et damnatur pius ; quod meretur malus patitur bonus ; quod perpetrat servus exsolvit dominus. . . . *Ego inique egi, tu pœna mulctaris ; ego facinus admisi, tu ultione plecteris.*"<sup>1</sup>

We likewise read in one of his sermons :

"Ego peccavi quod tu tulisti ; ego servus contumax commisi quod tu devapulasti . . . causa tuæ mortis fuit iniquitas mea, vulnera tua fecerunt crimina mea." <sup>2</sup>

Lastly Ritschl is quite right in saying that a few reminiscences of Athanasius are to be found in St. Anselm. The Incarnation was an ointment for our suffering eyes which made them to see God and to love Him, and thereby to merit one day a share in His blessedness :

<sup>1</sup> *Orat. ii. ; ibid. col. 860-1.*

<sup>2</sup> *Serm. ibid. col. 675.*



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“Ecce Redemptor tuus cæcatis luminibus collyrium suæ Incarnationis apposuit, ut qui Deum in secreto maiestatis fulgentem videre non poteras, Deum in homine apparentem aspiceres, aspiciendo cognosceres, cognoscendo diligeres, diligens summo studio ad eius gloriam pervenire satageres.”

By His Incarnation God also made us partakers of His Divine unchangeableness :

“Incarnatus est ut te ad spiritualia revocaret. Mutabilitatis tuæ particeps factus est, ut te suæ incommutabilitatis participem faceret. Inclinavit se ad humilia tua, ut te sublimaret ad excelsa sua.”

For in the Incarnate Word the entire human kind was glorified :

“Ipse namque Deus tuus per Incarnationis mysterium factus frater tuus, quid tibi inenarrabilis gaudii causaverit, dum naturam super omnem creaturam videris in eo exaltatam.”<sup>1</sup>

But, this notwithstanding, St. Anselm is even more struck by the Saviour's humanity :

“Certe nescio quia, nec plene comprehendere valeo unde hoc est quod longe dulcior es in corde diligentis te in eo quod caro es, quam in eo quod Verbum; dulcior in eo quod humilis, quam in eo quod sublimis.”<sup>2</sup>

He again describes the love which is testified to by the Incarnation and the love which it demands of us :

“Nec mens mea capere, nec lingua sufficit exprimere quam sis dignus amari a me, qui tantum dignatus es amare me. Creasti me cum non essem, redemisti me cum perditus essem. Sed conditionis quidem meæ et redemptionis causa sola fuit dilectio tua. . . . Multum quidem contulisti Creator, sed longe plus Redemptor. Si diligo multum te, tu certe et ante dilexisti me et plus. Dilexisti quando non dilexi, et, nisi non diligentem diligeres, diligentem quoque non efficeres.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Med.* i. 8; *ibid.* col. 716-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Med.* xii.; col. 770-1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* col. 772. *Cp. Med.* i. 6; col. 714. *Med.* xi.; col. 769. *Orat.* xli.; col. 935-7.

Not only does the Atonement inspire us with love it also gives us confidence. If the sight of our sins scares us, let the thought of Christ's death reassure us :

"Cum respicio ad mala opera quæ operatus sum, si me iudicare vis secundum quod merui, certus sum de perditione mea : cum vero respicio ad mortem tuam, quam pro redemptione peccatorum passus es, non despero de misericordia tua." <sup>1</sup>

In yet another place we find this prayer :

"Cerne manus innocuas pio manantes sanguine et remitte placatus scelera quæ patrauerunt manus meæ <sup>2</sup> . . . Si me pro mea, ut dignum est, despicias iniquitate, respice me saltem misertus pro dilectæ sobolis charitate. . . . Multum quippe est quod meretur mea impietas : longe autem maius est quod Redemptoris mei respicit iure pietas." <sup>3</sup>

These short extracts show us that there was another side to Anselm's mind of which the somewhat forbidding dialectics of the *Cur Deus Homo* give us no hint ; the two sides are not contradictory, they are mutually complementary. We preferred to quote this other side of his teaching before discussing his doctrine, that we might thereby have a complete view of his system and provide beforehand against certain objections.

### III

St. Anselm's system was at once too original and too important not to have drawn on itself the attention and the animadversions of the historians of dogma whose zeal is moreover far from being entirely unbiassed. They do not merely praise the logic and the novelty of his conceptions, nor do they forget that he set the Atonement on its true basis, an exact

<sup>1</sup> *Med.* vi. ; col. 740.

<sup>2</sup> *Orat.* ii. *ibid.* ; col. 860.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* col. 864. *Cp.* col. 865.

analysis of sin, and that in this matter he gave Catholic theology its definitive form—this last consideration perhaps furnishes an explanation for the persistent attacks of which St. Anselm is the butt, for, as M. Sabatier says, by blowing up the walls of St. Anselm's fortress the whole Catholic army may be buried in its ruins.

A classical objection is to ascribe to a Germanic source that idea of satisfaction which, as we have seen, is put by St. Anselm at the foundation of his system. Germanic law allowed of a crime being forgiven in consideration of a pecuniary compensation, or *Wergeld*, which is not a penalty but a species of voluntary fine; understood thus, Satisfaction takes the place of the penalty and dispenses from it. Now there is no doubt that this is St. Anselm's principle: "*Omne peccatum satisfactio aut pœna sequatur.*" On the other hand, according to Roman law the two ideas of satisfaction and penalty were correlative. That was the reason why the Latin Fathers attributed to Christ's death a penal character, whereas St. Anselm ascribes to it a *satisfacient* value. Hence the fact of this idea being derived from the old Teutonic law is evident: such at least is the view of Ritschl and of some of his disciples.<sup>1</sup>

But history gives the lie to this superficial identification, for it tells us that the elements of St. Anselm's theory of Satisfaction are to be found even from the beginning in the theory and practice of ecclesiastical penance, especially as it was understood by the Latin Church. Long before she had any knowledge of Germanic law, the Church had bidden her sinful children choose between two things: everlasting

<sup>1</sup> RITSCHL, *op. cit.* 1, p. 40. Cp. CREMER, in *Studien und Kritiken*, 1880, p. 7 s. and 1893, pp. 316-345.



death, which is the penalty of the sinner, or penance, which is the voluntary compensation for this penalty. It is Tertullian who vouches for this : "*Omne delictum aut venia dispungit aut pœna*," and he shows the direction to be taken by Christian thought when he adds : "*venia ex castigatione, pœna ex damnatione*."<sup>1</sup> Sulpicius Severus had also laid it down that "*fornicatio deputatur ad pœnam, nisi satisfactione purgatur*."<sup>2</sup> Surely it would be a matter of difficulty to prove that this writer was under the influence of Germanic law. It may be argued that, according to Roman law, Satisfaction was the penalty itself ; but it is easy to reply that, in the penitential discipline of the early Church, Satisfaction was never at any time conceived of solely according to the principles of Roman law. Again, it is wrong to set in opposition, as if they were irreconcilable, the ideas of Satisfaction and penalty ; for in point of fact Satisfaction always consists in a penalty—not of course in the penalty deserved by the guilty, but in a work which is troublesome to him who undertakes it. The very most we can say is that the idea of Satisfaction came to Anselm through a Germanic channel ; the term acquired indeed in Anselm's works a new meaning, but we have no right to deny that St. Anselm's idea was originally drawn from an ecclesiastical source ; that this was the case is sufficiently proved by facts.

Such are the conclusions to which modern historians have come ; conclusions which are all the more solid in that they proceed from a quarter which can certainly not be suspected of any bias. In what we have just said we have been merely summing up, almost *verbatim*, the reasoning of Harnack and

<sup>1</sup> TERTULL. *De pudicit.* ii.—*P.L.* ii. ; col. 985.

<sup>2</sup> SULP. SEVER. *Dial.* ii. 10.—*P.L.* xx. ; col. 208.



Loofs.<sup>1</sup> In spite of this, Ritschl's untenable view has been adopted by the popularisers of the history of Dogma, notably by M. Lichtenberger and M. Sabatier.<sup>2</sup>

But those historians who do not seek to contest the Catholic origin of Anselm's doctrine are not on that account favourably disposed to it; on the contrary, they never tire of carping at it; in this we find Harnack in complete agreement with Ritschl. After having faithfully and scrupulously summarised the *Cur Deus Homo*, Harnack devotes to St. Anselm a long critique, in which, against a few appreciative remarks, are set seven solid pages containing very nearly every objection that could possibly be levelled against St. Anselm.<sup>3</sup>

First of all, in order to show what Anselm's theory is not and will not be, Harnack points to its doctrinal incompleteness. Remarkable for its absence is any doctrine of reconciliation, of penal suffering, and of substitution in the proper sense of the word, or any theory assuring Salvation to the individual.<sup>4</sup> This we may answer by saying that the *Cur Deus Homo* deals with the objective requisites of Salvation, but that Christ's Satisfaction, when once allowed, becomes—as we see from St. Anselm's meditations—a fruitful source of confidence and love. No better means of reconciliation, no better assurance of Salvation could exist for the individual. Harnack also takes it grievously that Anselm forgets the principle of the guiltless

<sup>1</sup> HARNACK, *op. cit.* iii. pp. 357-358, note 2. Cp. ii. pp. 176-177. LOOFS, *Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte* (3rd ed.), p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> LICHTENBERGER, *op. cit.* p. 139. SABATIER, *op. cit.* p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> HARNACK, *op. cit.* iii. pp. 367-374. RITSCHL, *op. cit.* i. pp. 38-47.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 367-368.

suffering for the guilty,<sup>1</sup> forsooth because Anselm speaks of Christ's death as a Satisfaction rather than a penalty in the true sense of the word. But on the other hand all satisfaction is troublesome—Harnack had pointed this out himself—and consequently Satisfaction necessarily partakes of the nature of a penalty; moreover, what else could be the Satisfaction of Christ, who had no sin of His own to expiate, save the penalty of our sins? At the same time we admit that in the *Cur Deus Homo* these ideas remain in the background; the end he was pursuing in this dialogue led St. Anselm to accentuate the main outlines of his doctrine to the detriment of the secondary ideas. These other ideas reappear, however, in the freer setting of his Meditations, and we have already had occasion to see how touching were the thoughts suggested to him by the idea of substitution. Hence it would be wrong to turn into a weapon against St. Anselm his omission of certain points with which he forbears to deal, simply because they would have been out of place in his didactic work, and not because they were in any way inconsistent with his system.

But these defects are as nothing compared with the other faults and contradictions which Harnack discovers in St. Anselm's doctrine, and which are equally offensive to common sense, morality, and the gospel.<sup>2</sup> Following in the footsteps of Ritschl, the learned historian, with the help of much subtle logic curiously reminiscent of scholasticism, proceeds to lay bare the antinomies inherent in St. Anselm's system. There is a contradiction in that God's honour may be and may not be injured—as if St. Anselm had not

<sup>1</sup> HARNACK, p. 368. Cp. p. 374.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 369-371. Cp. RITSCHL, *op. cit.* pp. 44-46.

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established the distinction between God's inward and inviolable honour and that merely outward honour which consists in the order of the world, and which we may either observe or violate. There is another contradiction because God exacts Satisfaction now on His own behalf, now on that of man—as if there could be any contradiction in proving a thesis by two arguments belonging to different orders, but both tending in the same direction. There is a yet worse contradiction in that Christ's death is described as free, whereas on the other hand it is included in His mission of obedience. But had not St. Anselm expressly declared that Christ was not bound to die, because He was sinless, and that the texts which would seem to hint at a command to die must be understood as signifying merely His foreknowledge of, and His having accepted beforehand, His voluntary self-sacrifice? Lastly, it seems to Harnack that the two ideas of Satisfaction and merit are incompatible. But as Loofs,<sup>1</sup> a Protestant historian, who holds a different view from Harnack's, has it: "It was already quite a common opinion in the penitential teaching that supererogatory works afford satisfaction for sin, and that, when need for satisfaction is non-existent, or no longer exists, they form a beginning of merit. But in Christ's case this is exactly what happened, for He did not refuse to suffer death which had no right over Him."

Besides these inherent contradictions, Harnack makes many other complaints against St. Anselm. One of the oddest of these is that he accuses St. Anselm of rejecting the doctrine of the two natures and of dividing Christ according to the manner of the Nestorians (*eine vollkommene nestorianische Zerreissung*

<sup>1</sup> LOOFS, *op. cit.* pp. 273-274.



*der Person*).<sup>1</sup> The only ground for this complaint seems to be that Anselm had said that Christ's satisfaction was made by His humanity, and derived from His divine Person an infinite value. Harnack allows that this is the Western tradition held also by Ambrose and Augustine; we might go further and point out that it was also the tradition of the East, but Harnack's own admission is sufficient to set our minds at rest regarding Anselm's orthodoxy.

Lastly, Harnack objects to the very principle of Satisfaction, and roundly accuses Anselm of having transformed moral realities into legal categories<sup>2</sup>; of having conceived of sin as a debt and a personal offence against God, of having viewed God as a jealous proprietor who defends His rights and His honour, an idea of God which Harnack agrees with Ritschl in describing as "entirely mythological" (*der mythologische Begriff Gottes*).<sup>3</sup> We are also told that St. Anselm depicts God as drawn between two—between His mercy and His justice; M. Sabatier repeating the accusation of Strauss, charges St. Anselm with having "introduced into theology a theorem similar to that of the parallelogram of forces: the Divine mercy pulling towards forgiveness and the Divine justice demanding pitiless punishment are the two forces of which the necessary resultant is the diagonal of vicarious satisfaction." What is yet worse is that God is described as cruel, as unwilling to pardon us by love, and as taking pleasure in the death of His Son.

<sup>1</sup> HARNACK, *ibid.* p. 372.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. LICHTENBERGER, *op. cit.* p. 140. GRÉTILLAT, *op. cit.* iv. p. 287. SABATIER, *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> HARNACK, *ibid.* p. 373. Cp. RITSCHL, *op. cit.* p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> SABATIER, *op. cit.* pp. 53-54.



Hence it is the Father who is just and the Son who is good—in other words, a division is set up in the very bosom of the Trinity. Is this not the merest gnosticism, or indeed something worse than any gnosticism? Such at least is Harnack's impression.<sup>1</sup>

After having thus convicted Anselm of leanings to Nestorianism, mythology, and gnosticism, the learned professor can scarcely be blamed for stating that a more pernicious theory than that of Anselm never has seen the light within the Church. He adds, however, that, granting the separation of Christ's death from the rest of His life, no better theory could be suggested.

This last sentence perhaps gives us the key to the previous anathemas. The reason of all this ire is that Anselm attributes to Christ's death a special and objective value; that, whilst fully acknowledging the worth of the other actions of Christ's life, he takes His death as an independent factor, and as one which, of itself alone, furnishes the foundation of our Salvation. In a word, St. Anselm laid down the theory of that realistic conception of the Atonement which, as we have seen, had prevailed throughout the course of tradition. This is the reason why critics have seen fit to belabour him with all the reproaches which it is customary to heap on the Catholic doctrine of the Atonement, and, generally speaking, on all Christian metaphysics. This is not the place to reply to all these objections in detail. We have already seen how sin, though it does not personally hurt God, is an offence against Him; how His justice demands a chastisement though it does

<sup>1</sup> “*Die ganz gnostische Spannung zwischen Gerechtigkeit und Güte sofern der Vater der Gerechte ist und der Sohn der Gute.*” *Op. cit.* p. 373.

so without prejudice to His goodness; how Christ's death was willed by God though He did not take pleasure in it; how, in a word, the whole work of Atonement was the result of the love both of the Father and of the Son, a work which was nevertheless effected consistently with the claims of the most rigorous justice. As for the legal formulæ: honour, debt, satisfaction, etc.—which are used by St. Anselm and also by us—we have already, in summarising the *Cur Deus Homo*, shown how that they are merely a better-fitting garment and a more exact expression of certain great moral truths. Is it then true that not theologians only, but also historians are sometimes deceived by the appearance of words?

The above are the reasons why Catholic theology adopted the doctrinal legacy left by St. Anselm and failed to perceive in it any leanings towards either gnosticism or mythology; doubtless, too, Catholic theology will not lightly abandon this legacy, in spite of those historians who deny its orthodoxy.

But does this amount to saying that Anselm's system is the perfect expression of Catholic truth, and that it comprises no inexactitude and no exaggeration which might explain, though not indeed justify, the charges which are brought against it?

In the course of our examination of St. Anselm's doctrine we ventured to criticise certain points; for instance, we allowed that he does not bring out sufficiently Christ's human freedom, and that he does not seem to admit the possibility of works of supererogation. Another accusation which might be rightly made against the *Cur Deus Homo* is that it fails to establish an intimate solidarity between Christ and ourselves. The Saviour, by His voluntary

death, acquires in God's sight an infinite merit which remains, so to speak, unapplied; in order that this merit be applied to us there is required a new and special act of God, who, seeing Himself unable to recompense His Son, consents to remunerate His brethren in the Flesh. This manner of conceiving of the application of Christ's merits is explained by the legal procedure adopted by St. Anselm, but this explanation is not a sufficient excuse for the artificial and mechanical character of his scheme. This is the weakest point in St. Anselm's system.<sup>1</sup> We have, however, shown that the eleventh meditation corrects and completes the defect apparent in the *Cur Deus Homo*, a fact which tends to prove how difficult it is even for the greatest genius to compress his thoughts within the narrow boundaries of a system.

But the greatest objection alleged against St. Anselm's doctrine is that he represents as necessary the method adopted by God for the Atonement; that he, as it were, obliges God to it, and considers God as bound by the twofold necessity of redeeming us and of exacting an adequate satisfaction for our sin which could only be furnished by the God-man. There can be no doubt that this is Anselm's view, a view which is equally alien to the Fathers and to our theologians, who all contend that God was supremely free. This objection is anything but new, for it was made against St. Anselm soon after the publication of his book. Of this we have a curious testimony in a letter addressed to Abælard. The writer, whom some believed to have been Roscelin, answers Abælard, who had accused him of having calumniated certain saintly men, in particular that "grand doctor of the Church, Anselm, bishop of Canterbury." He dis-

<sup>1</sup> Cp. HARNACK, *op. cit.* pp. 368-369.



poses of this charge by stating that he reveres this glorious pontiff, who, by the saintliness of his life and the splendour of his learning, stands far above all other men, but that on one point he feels obliged to dissent from his doctrine :

“Ait enim in libro, quem ‘*Cur Deus homo*’ intitulat, aliter non posse Deum homines salvare nisi sicut fecit, id est nisi homo fieret et omnia illa quæ passus est pateretur. Eius sententiam sanctorum doctorum, quorum doctrina fulget Ecclesia, dicta vehementer impugnant.”<sup>1</sup>

Many attempts have been made to soften, by benignant interpretation, St. Anselm's thought. It has been pointed out that he has no wish of imposing on God any necessity strictly so-called, that he himself states that all necessity depends on God's free will.<sup>2</sup> Hence, when he speaks of the necessity of our Atonement, what he is thinking of is the actual, present plan of Providence, which, once decreed, must necessarily come to pass. It is also argued that this necessity may merely imply fitness. Such is Döerholt's argument ; but in order to be able to reason thus he is obliged to have recourse to distinctions invented by St. Thomas and by Suarez, and, finally, he too has to admit that St. Anselm might have put matters more clearly.<sup>3</sup> As for the necessity of Satisfaction, this same author frankly avows that he can find no excuse for St. Anselm, and that the saint has failed to consider quite a number of possible

<sup>1</sup> Inter opp. ABÆLARD, *Epist.* xv.—*P.L.* clxxviii. ; col. 362. *Cp. ibid. Ep.* xiv. ; col. 357-358.

<sup>2</sup> “Omnis quippe necessitas et impossibilitas eius subiacet voluntati. Illius autem voluntas nulli subditur necessitati aut impossibilitati. Nihil enim est necessarium aut impossibile nisi quia ipse ita vult.” *Cur Deus Homo*, ii. 17.

<sup>3</sup> DÖERHOLT, *op. cit.* pp. 200-211.



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hypotheses between the two extremes of entire Satisfaction for sin and a free pardon which allows sin to go entirely unrequited.<sup>1</sup> On the whole, it is better to acknowledge openly that St. Anselm "lays too much stress on the necessity of God's having to create men to take the place of the fallen angels and on the impossibility of a free pardon."<sup>2</sup> Anselm was led astray into these exaggerations by the apriorism of his methods and by the very object of his work, which, as will be remembered, was to demonstrate by reason to the unbeliever the need of the Incarnation. Such a demonstration was itself an impossibility, and it is not a thing to be wondered at, if, even in the twelfth century, protests were heard. Ever since then, like protests have been registered by every theologian who has studied objectively the work of St. Anselm.<sup>3</sup>

But in the course of his work St. Anselm had touched on some of the sublimest problems. He had shown that Salvation may be brought down to the repairing of sin, conceived of as an offence against God; he had also been led to study the grievousness of sin and the demands of Divine Justice. Moreover, the principles of which he makes use, though they may not prove the necessity of the Incarnation and of the Atonement, do at least serve to show the wonderful fitness of both. In a word, St. Anselm was the great builder of the theology of the Atonement; his *Cur Deus Homo* gives the plan and the framework of this theology; on later theologians will devolve the humbler task of per-

<sup>1</sup> DÖERHOLT, p. 265. Cp. pp. 267-268.

<sup>2</sup> BAINVEL, *op. cit.* col. 1346.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. PETAVIUS, *De Incarn. Verbi*, lib. ii. c. xiii. 8-12. SCHWANE, *op. cit.* iv. pp. 470-471. Cp. p. 478.

fecting his work by introducing into it that which it lacks by way of elasticity.

## IV

“Anselm’s theory did not forthwith succeed as well as might have been expected. The older tradition still held sway over men’s minds and over popular preaching. Anselm’s rational speculations and his Platonic dialectics excited much admiring wonder but proportionately little confidence.”<sup>1</sup> If M. Sabatier intended this clause of his as anything more than a merely oratorical embellishment, serving as a transition from Anselm to Abælard, then we can only say that this statement is not warranted by history.

By this we must not, however, be taken to mean that St. Anselm immediately gave rise to a new school of thought. The *Cur Deus Homo* was written about the year 1098, and some time had to elapse before it became known abroad. Hence it is not to be wondered at that it was unknown to certain writers at the beginning of the twelfth century. Such was the case, for instance, with Yvo of Chartres, who died in 1116. On the Atonement he confines himself to the traditional generalities. According to him, Christ’s death was a Sacrifice pre-figured by the sacrifices of the Old Law.<sup>2</sup> By it our death was destroyed; by Christ’s obedience on the Cross the results of Adam’s disobedience were repaired.<sup>3</sup>

What is more remarkable is the case of St.

<sup>1</sup> SABATIER, *op. cit.* p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> YVO CARNUT. *Serm.* v.—*P.L.* clxii.; col. 535-549. *Cp. Serm.* viii.; col. 569-570.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* *Serm.* vi.; col. 563-564.

Hildebert of Lavardin. He was a friend and correspondent of St. Anselm's; he reproaches him with the fewness and shortness of his letters.<sup>1</sup> He was acquainted with some of his friend's works, for a letter of his is preserved in which he asks St. Anselm for the work in which the latter had embodied the substance of what he had said against the Greeks at the Council of Bari. St. Anselm answered, sending him those of his works which Hildebert had not yet seen.<sup>2</sup> This happened at about the time when the *Cur Deus Homo* first saw the light, but, this notwithstanding, we find no trace of this work in Hildebert's theology.

When explaining the wherefore of the Incarnation, the latter states that no fitter means of Salvation could be found. The devil had to be vanquished by a man, and the Mediator, in order to reconcile God and Man, had to unite in Himself the two natures; lastly, that God could not have found any better means of demonstrating His love.<sup>3</sup> Again when describing the work of the Saviour, Hildebert, in a series of stately antitheses, tells us that His life was the example of our life, and that His death was the destruction of ours:

"Vita Christi nobis regula vivendi; mors Christi nostra est a morte redemptio et liberatio. Vita Christi nostram instruxit, mors Christi nostram destruxit."<sup>4</sup>

In another passage he makes his own the legal axiom of the Fathers: "*Duas nostras mortes sua simplici morte delevit.*"<sup>5</sup> He also concedes to Christ's

<sup>1</sup> HILDEBERT. CENOM. *Epist.* lib. iii. 6.—*P.L.* clxxi.; col. 287.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* lib. ii. 9-11; col. 216 and 218.

<sup>3</sup> *Serm.* ix.; col. 384. *Cp. Serm.* xi.; col. 390. *Serm.* lxxi.; col. 683. *Serm.* lv.; col. 610.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* xcix.; col. 799.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* xlvi.iii.; col. 579.



death a penal value: "*Pœnæ, quas non pro suis, sed aliorum peccatis pertulit.*"<sup>1</sup> And he adds that so great was our sin that it could be expiated by no other victim:

"Tantum erat peccatum humani generis ut per aliam hostiam non posset dimitti, nisi Unigenitus Dei Filius moreretur pro nobis debitoribus mortis."<sup>2</sup>

These different texts are all of them in agreement with tradition, but there is nothing in them to suggest that the writer was in any way indebted to St. Anselm.

Belonging to about the same period is the short treatise on the Incarnation by Bruno of Asti, Bishop of Segni, who died in 1125. This tract also ignores the doctrine of Satisfaction, and the author confines himself to explaining the Atonement by means of the traditional philosophy of Sacrifice.

God, he says, having failed to repair the angels' fall by means of guiltless man, resolved to do so by redeeming guilty man. But this He could not do without a sacrifice (*et hoc non sine immolatione*). This sacrifice was due to the Creator, this much is clear; but who was to offer it? It was not fit that it should be offered by an inanimate creature or by a creature devoid of reason. Hence it had to be offered by a rational being. But among rational creatures, angels were unable to offer it, being by nature invisible; hence it could only be offered by a man: "*Constabat igitur ut ab homine hæc fieret oblatio.*"

But the question arises: Of what nature must

<sup>1</sup> *Serm.* xlii.; col. 551. *Cp. Serm.* xcix.; col. 805. *Serm.* cvi.; col. 830.

<sup>2</sup> *Serm.* xcix.; col. 802. *Cp. ibid.* col. 797-798. *Serm.* c.; col. 809 f.

this sacrifice be? Evidently it must be equal or superior to those for whom it is offered:

“In auctoritate compertum est ut hoc sacrificium *par aut exuberans* esse debeat pro quo offertur.”

Hence a reasonable victim was required for the human race (*rationale pro rationali condecens hostia aderat*). Was man himself such a victim? No, because all men are sinners, and, moreover, because a single man could not suffice to redeem the whole human race. Nor could this office be fulfilled by an angel, because the nature of an angel is such as to render suffering impossible in his case, and, even granting that he could become incarnate, no angel would have sufficient love to offer himself on our behalf (*angelica charitas pro iniusto puniri frigesceret*). Hence one only could save us, the God-man:

“Quapropter solus restabat Creator qui . . . hominem liberarat . . . et hoc non in sua natura, sed per assumptum hominem, ut qui solum hominem redimere venerat Deus et homo immolaretur.”<sup>1</sup>

In this curious passage there are some striking reminiscences of Gregory the Great; but at the most it could only be argued that the author applied to the popular notion of Sacrifice the methods of St. Anselm's dialectics.

So far, then, we have found no trace of any direct influence of St. Anselm. Nevertheless, recollecting how much his friends urged him to publish the *Cur Deus Homo*, and how, as we learn from St. Anselm's own statement, they even went so far as to circulate surreptitiously inexact transcripts of it,<sup>2</sup> there can be no doubt about the favour with which this work must have been received on its first publication.

<sup>1</sup> BRUNO AST. *De Incarn.*—P.L. clxv. ; col. 1079-1081.

<sup>2</sup> ANSELM, *Cur Deus Homo*, i. 1-2 ; col. 361-363 *Præf.* and col. 359-360.

Again, as we have already seen, it was sufficiently well known at the beginning of the twelfth century to have called forth a protest. But, happily, we have far stronger testimonies to the influence exerted by St. Anselm, and several texts exist in which this influence can be directly traced.

The *Elucidarium*, now usually ascribed to Honorius of Autun (1120), long passed as a work of St. Anselm himself, an ascription which is not surprising, considering how well it reflects the great Doctor's doctrine.

Sin is grievous, more grievous even than all worldly evils. For us to be saved two things were required : God's honour had to be restored to Him and Satisfaction had to be made for the injury that had been done. As sin is something greater than the world, man, in order to repair it, had to offer to God something greater than the world ; now, manifestly, such a thing he could by no means do. But God did not will to leave him to perish utterly, lest His Divine plan should be brought to naught (*statutum Dei immutari non potuit*). Why, however, did He not pardon His creature, seeing that it had repented ? Because if He allowed His honour to be thus flaunted, and found no means of restoring it to Himself, His powerlessness would then be manifest, and because, if, on the other hand, He allowed man to be glorified, without inflicting on him any punishment, this would be going counter to Justice. Hence God deigned to send us a Saviour. It was neither possible nor fit that this Saviour should be an angel ; on the other hand, a mere man would have been powerless to make Satisfaction (*homo per se satisfacere non potuit*). Hence the Son of God became incarnate and by His precious and undeserved death paid our debt :



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“In ea autem natura qua homo fuit, maius pro iniuria mundo solvit, cum mortem indebitam subiit, quod solus homo debuit facere.”

God moreover did not exact this death ; He merely permitted it. Christ underwent it out of the purest love, thereby acquiring an infinite merit, which is applied to us.<sup>1</sup> All this is nothing but a summary of the *Cur Deus Homo*. This same doctrine is repeated by Honorius, in similar words, in another of his works, in which we find this excellent formula : “*Quod Filius Dei est incarnatus seu pro homine immolatus, quantum ad ipsum sola fuit voluntas ; quantum ad hominem, summa necessitas.*”

It was necessary because it was not fit that an angel should redeem us, and because no man could do so :

“Illum ergo mitti oportuit, qui solus sine peccato Deo hominem reconciliare potuit. Et cur in homine venit ? *Ut ipse innocens pro homine reo Deo Patri satisfaceret.*”<sup>2</sup>

The treatise written by Hermann, Abbot of St. Martin at Tournai, somewhere in the first quarter of the twelfth century, is a more personal work than the *Elucidarium*, but it none the less faithfully follows the theory of St. Anselm.<sup>3</sup> The author himself names the *Cur Deus Homo* as one of the works he has utilised.

He sets himself to answer the same question as St. Anselm : Why did God, who could have redeemed man by a single fiat, choose the so laborious means

<sup>1</sup> HONOR. AUG. *Elucidarium*, i. 15-17.—*P.L.* clxxii. ; col. 1120-2. *Cp. ibid.* 21 ; col. 1125-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Inevitable*, *ibid.* col. 1207-8. This was not, however, the only object of the Incarnation, for Honorius teaches that, even had sin not existed, the Son of God would have become man in order to deify the human race. *Libell. octo quæst. ibid.* col. 1187-8.

<sup>3</sup> HERMANN, *De Incarn.* i.-vi.—*P.L.* clxxx. ; col. 11-12.

of the Incarnation and Passion? He replies that God had created man to take the place of the fallen angels; this is why, when the devil had led man astray, God still desired to save him. But it was first of all necessary that man should be reconciled with God, and, for this, Satisfaction was required :

*“Hæc autem reconciliatio sine aliqua peccati ipsius satisfactione fieri non potest.”*

Now Satisfaction comprises two things : compensation for the damage done, and the repairing of the injury. Man by his sin had stolen from God all the souls which God purposed to save. To make Satisfaction he must therefore restore these souls, or their equivalent. But it is clear that a man cannot restore to God all the souls destined to be saved, he is unable to restore even a single soul such as that of Adam. The reason of this is that every man is a sinner; even though he offered to die for the sins of others he could not justify his own self, and still less others. On the other hand, can man restore, in lieu of these souls, some real equivalent? No; for all sacrifices, and the world itself, are nothing in comparison with the value of a soul. What then was God to do? Create a new man who should be just, as Adam was? But even such a man would not be able to redeem all men, and an angel would likewise be incapable of so doing. In fine, no creature, no not even the whole world, could offer to God a sufficient satisfaction for the sin of the first man.

From which it appears that God alone could offer such a satisfaction, whilst man alone owed it. God therefore became man, and, as the Creator's worth transcends that of all creatures, His death formed a superabundant compensation. His humiliations,

moreover, repaired the injury done to God by our pride and thus Christ furnished complete Satisfaction.

This material and quantitative equivalence established by Hermann is, of course, a quite illegitimate travesty of St. Anselm's deep doctrine, and the latter cannot be held responsible for it, but even in the false interpretation of the disciple we can recognise the influence of the master.

In describing Christ's work of Satisfaction, Hermann was the first to speak both of the sacrifice He had offered to God and of the undeserved death which He suffered as the penalty of our faults; he thus succeeded in combining the traditional saying with the new ideas introduced by St. Anselm. A like combination is to be found in the Commentaries of Herveus, a monk of Bourg-Dieu, who died in 1150.

Herveus, like his predecessors, follows in the footsteps of St. Augustine. Hence he considers Christ's death as a sacrifice for sin which is agreeable to God by the love which it demonstrates, and which thereby reconciles us with God.<sup>1</sup> This does not mean that God had not loved us before, but that by Christ's death was made the expiation of those sins which had estranged us from God.<sup>2</sup> Only Christ's death could suffice for the remission of all sins,<sup>3</sup> and it likewise had a penal character and paid our debt.<sup>4</sup> In this we find merely a restatement of the usual sayings. But Herveus, in at least one passage, has recourse also to the idea of Satisfaction :

<sup>1</sup> HERV. *In Rom.* viii.—*P.L.* clxxx. ; col. 698. *Cp.* 2 *Cor.* v. ; col. 1048. *Gal.* i. ; col. 1132. *Eph.* v. ; col. 1258.

<sup>2</sup> *Rom.* v. ; col. 659-660. *Cp.* *Rom.* iii. ; col. 639.

<sup>3</sup> 2 *Cor.* v. ; col. 1048. *Cp.* *Hebr.* vii. ; col. 1591.

<sup>4</sup> *Rom.* v. col. 658-661. *Cp.* *Gal.* iii. ; col. 1154. *Is.* liii. ; col. 493.



“Interficiens inimicitias : *Ipsa enim pro nobis Deo satisfecit*, sustinendo passiones et opprobria vice nostri, quas nos merito pati deberemus.”<sup>1</sup>

From this text it is clear that the idea of Satisfaction was not really a new one, but rather a stronger and more scientific statement of an idea already ancient. This explains why St. Anselm's doctrine was everywhere unhesitatingly accepted as soon as it became known. From its first statement it was seen to be just that natural and simple formula which theology had awaited so long. This same formula was soon to see service in the defence of truth in the now fast approaching hour of contradiction.

<sup>1</sup> *Eph.* ii. ; col. 1228.

## CHAPTER XIX

### OUTBREAK OF RATIONALISM AND ORTHODOX COUNTERBLAST

ABÆLARD—ST. BERNARD—HUGO OF ST. VICTOR

WE have seen that, so far, the doctrine of the Atonement had been growing slowly but peacefully without having once encountered a professed and determined adversary. But the theology of the Atonement was not to escape such an ordeal, though, whereas the other doctrines were, so to speak, assailed in their very cradle, and were reduced to the necessity of defending themselves almost before they had come into being, that of the Atonement was not called into question until it had reached maturity. The doctrine had just received its almost final touch from St. Anselm when Abælard appeared on the scene. Abælard did not indeed lead an attack on the faith, but, as with the other doctrines of the Church, so on that of the Atonement he ventured to emit such outspoken criticism and such adventurous hypotheses, that, as St. Bernard put it, he seemed to sum up in his person all previous heretics. The venturesome character of his views explains the honour in which Abælard is held by modern Protestants, who look on him as their most remote precursor. But the Church saw in the latent rationalism of his doctrines a standing danger, if not a direct attack on her mysteries. This explains why the rash statements of the reformer gave rise to a reaction, of

which St. Bernard was the most brilliant champion and Hugo of St. Victor the greatest worker. We shall now consider the progress of this controversy, of which the result was to place the dogmatic inheritance of the past on a yet securer footing, and likewise to ensure it a future development on the old lines.

## I

In his commentary on *Romans* Abælard deals *ex professo* with the Atonement. He first sets down the difficulties inherent in the question and then gives his own answer.

According to him the question resolves itself into this:

“Primo videtur quærendum qua necessitate Deus hominem assumpserit ut nos secundum carnem moriendo redimeret, vel a quo nos redemerit . . . et qua iustitia nos ab eius potestate liberaverit.”

Abælard dismisses the popular explanation drawn from the devil's rights. He then expounds the difficulties, the *rationes dubitandi*, which are involved in the very essence of the mystery such as he has represented it — those namely which concern the why and the wherefore of the Atonement. In this we find a list, though scarcely a well-ordered one, of the objections which it has since become customary to urge against the Catholic doctrine.

“What necessity, what reason or need had God, who could have delivered us by a single fiat, to become incarnate for our salvation and thus to suffer so many miseries and insults even to dying on the cross?” How, moreover, were we justified and reconciled to God by His death, seeing that men, in crucifying the Son of God, were committing a sin



far greater than Adam's act of disobedience? If then Christ's death was needed to expiate Adam's crime, what will be not needed to expiate the crime of His executioners? Can it reasonably be argued that Christ's death was so pleasing to God that, on this account merely, He became reconciled to us who had brought about Christ's death by our misdeeds? If He could thus pardon us this awful crime, why then did He not give us a free pardon for our previous and lesser faults?

Moreover, in what way has Christ's death made us more righteous than we were heretofore, in what way has it so justified us as to have delivered us from the penalties due? As Christ's death was a ransom paid to God, how could God free the captives on account of this ransom, seeing that He Himself had fixed this as the price of their deliverance? Or again, does it not seem unjust and cruel to demand the soul of an innocent man as a ransom, and to take pleasure in his death, even supposing we did not go so far as to say that this death was so agreeable to God, as, of itself, to reconcile Him to the world?

These reasons and their like, according to Abælard, give rise to a question of some difficulty (*non medio-crem movere quæstionem*), that of our redemption and justification by the death of Christ. No doubt, the question is a difficult one, though the objections are perhaps not so insoluble as they appeared to Abælard. At any rate, it is quite clear that Abælard's objections were directed, not, as is sometimes said, against certain exaggerations of St. Anselm's, but against the very mystery of the Atonement. "Abælard," writes M. Sabatier, "agreed with Anselm in denying the devil's vested right, and in excluding it from the work of

redemption; but he was likewise opposed to any theorising which tended to transform moral realities into geometrical categories.”<sup>1</sup> But as a matter of fact, what Abælard opposed was not so much St. Anselm’s theory of Satisfaction, as the realistic view of the Atonement, a view which is essential to Catholic faith.

After having brought all these difficulties into the light, Abælard does not deign to answer them, but proceeds to lay down his own doctrine concerning the mystery. His view amounts to this, that the Incarnation and the Passion justify us because they call forth our love :

“Nobis autem videtur quod in hoc iustificati sumus in sanguine Christi et Deo reconciliati, quod, per hanc singularem gratiam nobis exhibitam quod Filius suus nostram suscepit naturam, et in ipsos nos tam verbo quam exemplo instituendo usque ad mortem perstiterit, *nos sibi amplius per amorem astrixit.*”

The just of the olden Law had already this faith and this charity, but these virtues were strengthened by the realisation of the prophecies. It was only natural that the reality should be a more powerful factor than the promise :

“*Iustior, id est amplius Dominum diligens, quisque fit post passionem Christi quam ante, quia amplius in amorem accendit completum beneficium quam speratum.*”

This leads Abælard to the statement that our redemption consisted merely in the love which was enkindled in our hearts by the Passion, a love which frees us from sin and bestows on us the true freedom of the children of God :

“Redemptio itaque nostra est illa summa in nobis per passionem Christi dilectio.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> SABATIER, *op. cit.* p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> ABÆLARD, *In Rom.* lib. ii. c. iii.—*P.L.* clxxviii. ; col. 833-836.

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We find similar-sounding statements in other passages of the same commentary :

“Eum pro nobis non ob aliud mortuum, dicit [Apostolus] nisi propter veram illam charitatis libertatem propagandam, per hanc videlicet quam nobis exhibuit summam dilectionem.”<sup>1</sup> “Peccatum damnare, id est reatum omnem et culpam destruere *per charitatem ex summo beneficio.*”<sup>2</sup>

It is curious to notice how Abælard, who usually makes a point of basing his views upon texts, here puts aside both tradition and Scripture, and allows himself to be led by mere speculation. In other words, he seeks to solve by logic alone a question of fact, and if in this wise he succeeds in removing the mystery, it is only by neglecting the very data of the problem. But what is more remarkable still, is that we find in Abælard, in those passages in which he discards theory, all the customary traditional sayings. Thus he, too, looks on Christ's death as a Sacrifice :

“In cruce suspensus tanquam in ara pro nobis immolatus est.”<sup>3</sup>

He, too, speaks of the ransom,<sup>4</sup> and of the cleansing of our souls by Christ's blood :

“Ut in eius sanguine nostrorum maculas dilueret peccatorum.”<sup>5</sup>

He, too, admits that Christ's death had a penal value—the very point which Harnack states to be missing in Abælard<sup>6</sup> :

“Nostra maledictio in Christum retorquetur per pœnam, quem, percussum a Deo et attritum propter scelera nostra, Propheta longe

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<sup>1</sup> ABÆLARD, *In Rom.* lib. ii. c. v. ; col. 860.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* lib. iii. c. viii. ; col. 898.

<sup>3</sup> *Expos. Symb. Apost. ibid.* col. 622.

<sup>4</sup> *In Rom.* lib. iii. c. vii. ; col. 893-4.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* lib. iii. c. viii. ; col. 908. *Cp.* col. 898.

<sup>6</sup> HARNACK, *Dogmeng.* iii. p. 377.



ante prædixerat. . . . Christus corporaliter est mortuus et corporaliter per pœnam a Deo maledictus, hoc est ex sententia Dei pœnæ huic deputatur. Hinc et peccata nostra suscepisse seu portasse dicitur, hoc est *peccatorum nostrorum pœnam tolerasse.*"<sup>1</sup>

A like passage is also found in the Commentary on *Romans*:

"Duobus modis propter delicta nostra mortuus dicitur, tum quia nos deliquimus propter quod ille moreretur et *peccatum commisimus, cuius ille pœnam sustinuit*: tum etiam ut peccata nostra moriendo tolleret, id est pœnam peccatorum pretio suæ mortis auferret."<sup>2</sup>

Abælard even extends the efficaciousness of Christ's sacrifice to the just imprisoned in Limbo:

"Passionis illius efficaciam iusti senserunt antiqui, per eam a pœnis liberati."<sup>3</sup>

It is instructive to find in the works of the reformer such involuntary reminiscences of orthodoxy.<sup>4</sup> But we have no right to lay too much stress on these stray texts, which, taken alone, might prove that the Passion was, objectively speaking, efficacious, for, as we know, Abælard has deliberately excluded such an efficaciousness and only allows the Passion the subjective value of an example. Such passing inconsistencies and unconscious concessions to popular language are not sufficient to correct, still less to contradict, Abælard's formal statements.

Abælard refers us for further information to his *Theology*. This work is no longer extant, but we possess another source of knowledge in the *Epitome*, formerly ascribed to him, but which is now acknowledged to be a kind of hand-book of his theology

<sup>1</sup> *Serm.* xii. ; *ibid.* col. 480-1.

<sup>2</sup> *In Rom.* lib. ii. c. iv. ; col. 859.

<sup>3</sup> *Expos. sym. Apost.* col. 626.

<sup>4</sup> This apparent orthodoxy is noticed by BALTZER, *Die Sentenzen des Petrus Lombardus* (Leipzig, 1902), p. 102.

compiled by one of his disciples.<sup>1</sup> Here we find an echo of the same ideas which we met in the commentary on *Romans*.

Of all the benefits conferred by the Word-made-Flesh, the greatest, says the writer, is the instruction He gives us and the love He shows us. It is love which delivers us from sin, and Christ's death—the author follows Abælard in also using expressions derived from the figures of redemption and sacrifice—is but a means of exciting us to love :

“Venit . . . ut eum [hominem] a servitute peccati, *dilectionem suam ei infundens*, redimeret, seipsum pretium et hostiam Patri offerendo et solvendo.”

There were many other means of effecting our Salvation but none was fitter, because none was more apt to instruct man by word and example and to lead martyrs to be humble.

Hence the whole work may be summed up in the love which God thereby reveals and in the love with which He inspires us :

“Et hoc totum factum constat, ut ostenderet quantam dilectionem in homine haberet et ut hominem magis ad sui dilectionem accenderet.”<sup>2</sup>

Another document illustrating Abælard's thought is the humble retractation which has been left to posterity by one of his disciples, Godfrey, Bernard's successor at Clairvaux :

“Ego mihi aliquando magistrum fuisse recorder, qui . . . pretium redemptionis evacuans, nil aliud nobis in sacrificio Dominicæ passionis commendabat nisi *virtutis exemplum et incentivum amoris*. . . . Et quidem magna hæc et vera, sed non sola.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PORTALIÉ, *Dict. théol. cath.* art. *Abélard*, col. 40. Cp. col. 53 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Epitome theologiæ Christianæ*, xxiii.; col. 1730-1. Cp. col. 1732.

<sup>3</sup> Inter opp. GULLIELM. A. S. THEOD.—*P.L.* clxxx.; col. 331-332,

Hence it is certain that Abælard, though he sometimes, from force of habit, used traditional expressions, denied all objective value to the Passion, and reduced its saving efficaciousness to a merely subjective impression, and that liberal Protestants are uttering no calumny when they speak of him as their forerunner. This is no doubt the reason why they describe his doctrine as deep and touching. But this doctrine was radically opposed to that of tradition, and for this reason the Church, under pain of being false to herself, was bound to impugn it.

## II

William of St. Thierry was the first to call attention to Abælard's errors, and he forthwith penned a refutation which soon excited St. Bernard to a like effort. Of the two works thus called forth, William's has at least the advantage of being more moderate and kindly in tone.

Our author first of all points out that Abælard's disciples go so far as to say that Christ's coming was not necessary for our Salvation, and he complains that thereby the whole mystery of the Atonement is dissolved. He then goes on to examine one by one Abælard's objections not only against the devil's rights, but also against the Atonement itself. He reproaches his opponent with want of respect for authority, and charges him with reading the Gospel with less reverence than the works of Plato.

Having reached the real question at issue, he begins by taking refuge behind the mystery :

note. The writer proceeds : "Benedictus Dominus, qui mihi simul et vobis magistrum postea dedit meliorem, per quem prioris redarguit ignorantiam, insolentiam confutavit."



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*“Quæ vero sit iustitia in sanguine Christi et quo modo sit hominis reconciliatio ad Deum per mortem Filii eius, difficilis quæstio est, non agitanda in tumultu, sed pie et humiliter quærenda in spiritu.”*

He then protests against the exaggeration of which Abælard unjustly accused the Church. There can be no question of a reconciliation between God and man, in the common meaning of the word reconciliation :

*“Tanquam hominis irati et implacabilis nisi per mortem innocentis Filii, cum magis debuerit irasci pro morte iniusta innocentis.”*

The real meaning of the expression is this : God had from all eternity decreed to create the world, and, in the world, man, who should repair the loss occasioned by the fall of the angels. Foreseeing man's own fall, He also decreed to restore him by the intermediary of Christ. In the event man sinned, and angered God, and thus rendered some punishment necessary :

*“Ira Dei iusta vindicta fuit peccati immissa peccatori ; inimitiæ inter Deum et hominem non aliæ quam quæ esse solent inter iustitiam et peccatum.”*

But when the time for mercy came, God sent His Son to save us. Foreseeing that He would be put to death, He willed to make this death the instrument of the world's Salvation :

*“Prædestinavit quid de ipsa morte eius ageretur, scilicet salus mundi.”*

In the event, through the devil's hatred, Christ was led to death, though He had not deserved to die, being without sin. He, however, accepted in all freedom His death, taking as it were on to His own shoulders the burden of our guilt :

*“Sponte suscepit mortem . . . et transtulit in se pœnam omnium peccatorum.”*

Thereby He left us a legacy of righteousness, just as Adam had left us a legacy of sin. Hence He literally became our substitute and underwent the punishment of our sins, which have therefore not remained unrequited, for they were expiated by Him in our lieu :

*“Sicque in regno iustitiæ malum non remansit inordinatum, cum, in eo qui pro peccatoribus mortuus est, nullum remansit iustificati hominis peccatum impunitum.”*

In this wise His undeserved death freed us from everlasting death :

*“Tantique valuit pretium sanguinis illius innocentis ut, per indebitam eius mortem temporalem, æternam debitam evaderent.”*

But must we say that God insisted on His Son's death as a satisfaction? No, He merely accepted it as a willing sacrifice :

*“Nec a Deo Patre quasi ad satisfaciendum est requisitus, cum tamen ei plenissime satisfecerit oblatum.”*

In this Sacrifice the union of the Trinity is manifested by its common plan of love :

*“Bonitas Patris ad Filium et ad creaturam ipsa est imperium Patris ad Filium de salute humana . . . Christus per eam [obedientiam] obtinuit iustitiam, patiundo pœnam peccati sine peccato.”*

Christ's righteousness is applied to us by God's bounty, and thus our sins are wiped away and we are reconciled with God :

*“Sicque sublato, hoc est dimisso peccato, cui iustitia inimicabatur, plena facta est Dei et hominum reconciliatio, et finis iræ, hoc est iustæ vindictæ in Deo . . . Fit finis vindictæ, sed æternæ . . .”*

In concluding, William distinguishes three things in the work of the Redeemer: the mystery of our reconciliation, the example of humility, and the enkindling of charity. He points out that Abælard forgets the first and neglects the second, and con-

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fines himself to considering at length the third, as if this one could exist apart from the others :

“Tanquam posset provocari homo superbus ad amorem Dei, nisi primo humiliaretur ab amore sui et *nisi prius sacramento redemptionis solveretur*, ligatus a condicione et vinculo peccati.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus William of St. Thierry's work had a twofold object ; he laboured to substantiate the supernatural realism of the mystery of the Atonement—and this part of his work is not so well done as it might have been—and he endeavoured to clear the mystery from the false ideas with which Abælard had disfigured it. This same double task was now to be undertaken in his turn, more fully and also more vigorously, by St. Bernard.

### III

Historians never fail to observe that St. Bernard defended against Abælard the rights of the devil, but they seem to confine Bernard's work to this, forgetful of the fact that he, amongst other things, and at even greater length, explained and defended the traditional doctrine of expiation.

The unbiassed student will notice that, when stating Abælard's errors, he devotes a whole page to Abælard's criticism of the doctrine of expiation, whilst he has only a few lines dealing with the devil's rights.<sup>2</sup> This is sufficient to show us how unequal was the respective value of these ideas in his mind. Likewise, in refuting Abælard's errors, after having given the devil his own—with this part of his work we shall deal later—Bernard devotes most of

<sup>1</sup> GULLIELM. A. S. THEOD. *Disput. adv. Abæl.* vii.—*P.L.* clxxx.; col. 269-276.

<sup>2</sup> BERNARD, *Capitula hæc. Petri Abælardi*, iv.—*P.L.* clxxxii.; col. 1050.



his labour to expounding and justifying the Catholic doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

He explains the mystery of the Atonement by our intimate solidarity with Christ :

“Homo siquidem qui debuit, homo qui solvit. Nam si unus pro omnibus mortuus est, ergo omnes mortui sunt : *ut videlicet satisfactio unius omnibus imputetur*, sicut omnium peccata unus ille portavit. Nec alter iam inveniatur qui forefecit, alter qui satisfecit ; quia caput et corpus unus est Christus. *Satisfecit ergo caput pro membris, Christus pro visceribus suis.*”

He then shows that it is as just that we should be hallowed by the righteousness of one, as that we should be stained by another's sin :

“Cur non aliunde iustitia, cum aliunde reatus ? Alius qui peccatorem constituit, alius qui iustificat a peccato ; alter in semine, alter in sanguine.”

This solidarity, or rather this identity, of all men with Christ, shows a distinct improvement on the purely legal point of view of the *Cur Deus Homo* ; historians rightly point to this idea as one of the most remarkable characteristics of the Abbot of Clairvaux's doctrine.<sup>2</sup> In adopting this point of view he was, however, merely reverting to St. Paul and the Fathers.

St. Bernard then proceeds to belabour Abælard for having sought to reduce all to a mere example :

“Ad id solum putet et disputet redigendum, ut traderet hominibus formam vitæ vivendo et docendo, patiendo autem et moriendo charitatis metam præfigeret. Ergo docuit iustitiam, et non dedit ? ostendit charitatem, sed non infudit ?”

To do so, is to make plain, in other words, to dissolve, the mystery :

“Altissimum sacramentum et mysterium . . . planum et apertum reddit.”

<sup>1</sup> *Contra errores Abælardi*, vi. 15-ix. 25. *Ibid.* col. 1065-1072.

<sup>2</sup> *Cp.* RITSCHL, *op. cit.* i. p. 18 and GRÉTILLAT, *op. cit.* iv. p. 289.

He then answers the objections of his adversary. Why was it necessary for the Saviour to undergo this cruel Passion? It was because we needed it, and because of His love; beyond this we cannot go. God had no doubt a thousand other ways of saving us, but this does not detract from the value of that means which He chose. Our business is to examine the facts as they are given to us in Revelation, and not to seek their why and wherefore. Nevertheless we may state that the method adopted was the fittest, because the many sufferings of the Redeemer serve better for our instruction. Moreover, even though we cannot discern the mystery of God, we are always free to gather its fruit. This fruit is our reconciliation with God and the forgiveness of our sins. Let us take the fact without seeking its reason :

“Cur, inquis, per sanguinem, quod potuit facere per sermonem? Ipsum interroga [Apostolum]. Mihi scire licet quod ita; cur ita, non licet.”

These are the words of a believer who puts faith before reason.

No doubt Christ's death was a crime, but notwithstanding this it was pleasing to God on account of the love which it displayed :

“Quasi non potuerit Deo in uno eodemque facto displicere iniquitas malignantium, et placere pietas patientis.”

Who will expiate this sin? Is not Christ's blood precious enough to wipe out even the sin of His own executioners? It is asked how God could take pleasure in the death of the Innocent. But it was not with His death but in His self-sacrifice that God was well pleased: “*Non mors, sed voluntas placuit sponte morientis.*” This explains how there was there no act of cruelty.

"Non requisivit Pater sanguinem Filii, sed tamen acceptavit oblatum : non sanguinem sitiens, sed salutem, quia salus erat in sanguine. . . . Salus plane, et non sola charitatis ostensio."

Having thus answered Abælard's objections, St. Bernard goes on to attack his doctrine. What is the use of an example, he asks, if Christ did not first restore us : "*Quid prodest quod nos instituit, si non restituit ?*" Seeing that the Apostle established a comparison between Christ and Adam, we must admit a like influence in the two instances. Now, no one short of a Pelagian would argue that Adam was hurtful to us only by his example :

"Si christianæ fidei et non hæresi Pelagianæ acquiescentes, generatione non institutione traductum in nos confitemur Adæ peccatum, et per peccatum mortem ; fateamur necesse est et a Christo nobis non institutione sed regeneratione restitutam iustitiam, et per iustitiam vitam."

Abælard's principles would also result in the Atonement being useless to children, who are incapable of that great love which he preaches.

Lastly, in concluding, Bernard, like William of St. Thierry, sums up the objects of the Incarnation :

"Tria præcipua in hoc opere nostræ salutis intueor : formam humilitatis . . . , charitatis mensuram . . . , *redemptionis sacramentum*."

Evidently the last point is a necessary condition of the other two :

"Horum duo priora sine ultimo sic sunt, ac si super inane pingas. . . . Non habent fundamentum, ac proinde nec statum, si desit redemptio. . . . Nec humilitatis exempla, nec charitatis insignia præter redemptionis sacramentum sunt aliquid."

In these passages, we have seen, St. Bernard maintains against Abælard the Catholic realism, without however explaining the mode. He reasserts the existence of the mystery which had been called



into question, but he does not seek to determine its nature. He poses as a defender of the faith but not as a theologian.

The explanation of the mystery, which is wanting here, is outlined elsewhere, in a work written outside of any polemical preoccupation.<sup>1</sup>

Christ's life and death, we read there, are both most precious, the first for our instruction, the second for our deliverance :

"Vita Christi vivendi mihi regula exstitit; mors, a morte redemptio. Illa vitam instruxit, mortem ista destruxit."

Here it is easy to feel the influence of St. Augustine. Man, says St. Bernard, had found in sin the death of his soul, and, in consequence of this, the death also of his body. Christ's single death was the destruction of both :

"Utrique Deus-Homo una sua corporali ac voluntaria benigne et potenter occurrit, illaque una sua nostram utramque damnavit."

The reason of this power of Christ's death must be sought in its being undeserved and free :

"Unde confidimus quod mortem abstulit? Hinc plane *quod eam ipse qui non meruit pertulit*. Qua enim ratione exigeretur a nobis quod pro nobis ipse iam solvit?"

The sinner's death, at the most, can only repay a personal debt, but a just man can rightly die for others :

"Quanto sane indignius moritur qui mortem non meruit, tanto is iustius, pro quo moritur, vivit."

It is asked how Justice can cause the guiltless to die for the guilty. St. Bernard answers that this is a proceeding not of Justice but of Mercy :

"Non est iustitia, sed misericordia. . . . At vero si iustitia non est, non tamen contra iustitiam est."

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<sup>1</sup> *Liber ad milites templi*, xi. 18-28. *Ibid.* col. 932-937.

But, admitting that the just can make satisfaction for the sinner, how, it is asked, can one make satisfaction for many? St. Bernard, following the lead of St. Paul, answers that if Adam's sin could be the loss of all of us, *a fortiori*, Christ's righteousness could save us, and he concludes, summing up his own thought:

"Christus igitur et peccata dimittere potuit, cum Deus sit; et mori, cum sit homo; et mortis moriendo solvere debitum, quia iustus; et omnibus unus ad iustitiam vitamque sufficere, quandoquidem et peccatum et mors ex uno in omnes processerit."

But His death was delayed that He might set us an example and so excite us to charity, so that nothing might be wanting to our Salvation.

In his sermons, St. Bernard frequently speaks of the Atonement, usually with the object of describing, with all his glowing eloquence, how great a love Christ has shown to us and what love His life demands of us.<sup>1</sup> He tells us that the only motive which led the Saviour to effect the Atonement by means of suffering, was that He considered this means the most apt to urge us to charity.<sup>2</sup> From this we see that St. Bernard was far from abandoning to Abælard the monopoly of the moral aspect of the Atonement. Harnack himself is forced to admit that St. Bernard speaks "in a most edifying manner of his love for Christ."<sup>3</sup> But withal he never lost sight of the objective value of the Passion.

In Christ's Passion there was manifested an obedience which absolves us from our sins. His death was more powerful for good than all our sins had

<sup>1</sup> *Serm de passione*, 4-5.—*P.L.* clxxxiii.; col. 264-5. *Cp. De diversis*, *Serm.* xxii. 5-7; col. 597-8.

<sup>2</sup> *In cantic. cant. Serm.* xi. 7; *ibid.* col. 827.

<sup>3</sup> HARNACK-CHOISY, *Précis*, p. 339.

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been for evil.<sup>1</sup> His death alone would have sufficed to save us: "*Ea nimirum hostia, sicut sola prodesse potuit, sic sola suffecit.*" The reason being that Christ alone was sinless.<sup>2</sup> Hence our reconciliation, which is gratuitous so far as we are concerned, was a work of toil for God:

"... Gratis quod ad te pertinet. Nam quod ad illum, plane non gratis. Salvus factus es pro nihilo, sed non de nihilo tamen."<sup>3</sup>

But the explanation of the whole work is to be sought in His love:

"Dilexit autem dulciter, sapienter, fortiter. . . . In carnis assumptione condescendit mihi, in culpæ vitatione consuluit sibi, in mortis susceptione *satisfecit Patri.*"

This Satisfaction is the all-important thing, but it, too, presupposes charity:

"Ut Patri nos reconciliet, mortem fortiter subit et subigit, fundens pretium nostræ redemptionis sanguinem suum. Ergo, nisi amasset dulciter, non me in carcere requisisset illa maiestas; sed iunxit affectioni sapientiam, iunxit et patientiam, qua placaret offensum Deum Patrem."<sup>4</sup>

In fine, the Abbot of Clairvaux, neither in his refutation of Abælard nor in his other works, is inclined to study seriously the doctrine of the Atonement. He lays stress on the traditional side of the doctrine which had been impugned by Abælard, but he is little concerned with its explanation, and confines himself to repeating the dicta of the Fathers; the idea which has his preference is that of penal substitution. The reader will also have per-

<sup>1</sup> *Serm. de passione*, 7; *ibid.* col. 266-267. Cp. *In festo Annunt.* *Serm.* i. 4; *ibid.* col. 384.

<sup>2</sup> *In domin. Palm. Serm.* iii. 3; col. 261. Cp. *In nat. Domini, Serm.* iv. 5; col. 102.

<sup>3</sup> *In Psalm.* "Qui habitat." *Serm.* xiv. 3; col. 240.

<sup>4</sup> *In cant. Sermo.* xx. 2-3; col. 867-868.



ceived that St. Bernard sometimes makes use of the idea of Satisfaction ; his using it proves it to be in agreement with traditional views ; but, all the same, he does not enter at all fully into the meaning of the idea. In this, moreover, St. Bernard was acting consistently, his object being to “expound the doctrine without entering into the regions of speculative theology which St. Anselm explored.”<sup>1</sup>

As a result of St. Bernard’s polemics and of the ecclesiastical anathemas which followed, Abælard was induced to recant. In his retraction he expresses himself as follows concerning the Atonement :—

“Solum Filium Dei incarnatum profiteor, ut nos a servitute peccati et a iugo diaboli liberaret, et supernæ aditum vitæ morte sua nobis reseraret.”<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the sentence which deals with the devil’s rights, the clause is indefinite. It fails to express the manner of the efficaciousness of Christ’s death ; but it safeguards adequately the supernatural and objective value of the Atonement and this is at once the substance of the Catholic doctrine and the fact which St. Bernard wished to be placed above discussion. Nor are there wanting certain Protestants, such as Reuter and Seeberg, who fully appreciate the good work done by St. Bernard in impugning the dangerous innovations of Abælard, and who praise him for having laid stress on the objective foundation of the Atonement. It is in vain that Harnack bids them emerge from such outworn dogmatic categories.<sup>3</sup> The objectivity of the Atonement is still dear to every soul which believes in the reality of the greatest of

<sup>1</sup> VACANDARD, *Dict. th. cath.* art. *Bernard*, col. 762.

<sup>2</sup> ABÆLARD, *Confessio fidei*.—*P.L.* clxxviii. ; col. 105-106.

<sup>3</sup> HARNACK, *Dogmengeschichte*, iii. p. 376, note 1.

our mysteries. In defending it, St. Bernard merely conformed himself to the attitude of every Christian teacher, from the time of St. Paul and the Gospel. This is sufficient to earn for St. Bernard the lasting gratitude of every historian who retains the sentiment of Catholic tradition, and to ensure his being followed by all believers who are not willing to abandon the essential facts of Christianity at the bidding of a vague liberalism.

#### IV

Whilst St. Bernard was engaged in defending against Abælard the integrity of our doctrine, others were striving, in the quiet of their studies, to set up on its old lines of development, the doctrine, of which the normal progress had been retarded by Abælard's ill-advised efforts. Against the school of St. Geneviève was pitted that of St. Victor, and it is now a matter of common knowledge, how powerfully this latter school, especially its best-known master, Hugo, contributed to the formation of Scholasticism, by restraining within the bounds of orthodoxy the erring curiosity of the friends of Abælard. Hugo of St. Victor accepts St. Anselm's conception of the Atonement.

The devil, he writes, was forthwith cast into hell, whilst man, whom God wished to save, was left on earth to work out his Salvation. But, having proved unequal to the task, he was finally forced to throw himself on God's mercy, whereupon God willed to doff His character of judge in order to become man's counsellor and Saviour:

*"Necesse est ut Deus . . . interim per gratiam ostendat evadendi consilium et post consilium conferat auxilium."*

Under the natural law, God left man to himself,

that he might find by experience the need of counsel. When he had discovered his powerlessness, this counsel was given to him by means of the written Law. Lastly, when man had fully recognised his helplessness, God in the time of grace was pleased to offer His help :

“Consilium erat in ratione satisfactionis: auxilium erat in effectu redemptionis.”

But Hugo does not confine himself to thus describing this help in mystical terms. Sin was an injury and an insult offered to God, and, to appease His wrath, both had to be repaired :

“Deum rationabiliter placare non poterat, nisi et damnum quod intulerat restauraret et de contemptu satisfaceret.”

Whence the two parts we find in the work of Salvation: compensation and Satisfaction.

But man had nothing which he could give to God as a compensation for his fault; an irrational creature was insufficient, and a man likewise, because all men were sinners :

“Nihil ergo homo invenit unde Deum sibi placare posset, quia sive sua, sive seipsum daret, digna recompensatio non esset.”

Hence God came to man's rescue by giving him a man who was much higher than the first man, and who could make satisfaction in his lieu :

“Dedit Deus gratis homini quod homo ex debito Deo redderet. Dedit igitur homini hominem, quem homo pro homine redderet, qui, ut digna recompensatio fieret, priori non solum æqualis sed maior esset.”

By this means, in Christ, both justice and mercy were made manifest :

“Quod ergo homini datus est Christus, Dei fuit misericordia. Quod ab homine redditus est Christus, fuit hominis iustitia.”

Christ's very birth sufficed to appease God's wrath,



for, from that moment, mankind had in its midst a man who was equal to, and even greater than, the first. But satisfaction had still to be made for the insult offered to God :

*“Sed adhuc supererat homini ut, sicut restaurando damnum placaverat iram, ita quoque pro contemptu satisfaciendo dignus fieret evadere pœnam.”*

The means to effect this was to impose a voluntary suffering, which should be undeserved, in order that man might thus escape the punishment he deserved. But man already deserved every affliction for his sins, hence a guiltless one was required to suffer in his place :

*“Ut ergo homo iuste debitam pœnam evaderet, necesse fuit ut talis homo pro homine pœnam susciperet, qui nihil pœnæ debuisset.”*

Christ alone could do this, and He did it. His birth, as we have seen, paid man's debt, His death was the expiation of our sin :

*“Nascendo debitum hominis Patri solvit et moriendo reatum hominis expiavit, ut, cum ipse pro homine mortem quam non debebat sustineret, iuste homo propter ipsum mortem quam debebat evaderet.”*

In this wise our Saviour put Himself in our place :

*“Causam nostram fecit, quia debitum Patri pro nobis solvit et moriendo reatum expiavit.”*

A little farther on Hugo lays stress on the solidarity which binds our nature with Christ's :

*“Suscepit de natura hostiam pro natura, ut de nostro esset holocaustum offerendum pro nobis.”*

Lastly he takes care to admit, with St. Augustine, that God might have redeemed us otherwise ; but he, nevertheless, considers the Incarnation as the

aptest means to excite in us hope, and to serve us for our instruction.<sup>1</sup>

In Hugo's doctrine there are some curious subtleties; for instance, his fashion of conceiving of the Incarnation as the payment of our debt is quite original, and, need we say, quite unfounded. But, as we can see, he applies to the older idea of penal substitution, which we found likewise in St. Bernard, all that Anselm had said of moral Satisfaction. We find here the same principles, though they are applied to an idea of secondary interest. Hugo thereby betrays that he is a shallower thinker than St. Anselm, albeit a more logical theologian than St. Bernard; in other words, he may serve as a connecting link between the two.

## V

The healthy progressivism of the school of St. Victor was all the more useful, seeing that Abælard's influence was not yet dead. Recent criticism informs us that Abælard laid the foundation of a school of his own<sup>2</sup>; when we examine the works of the members of this school we find that, unwilling either to follow or to impugn the doctrine of the master, they preserve a discreet silence on the matter of the Atonement, or else express themselves quite insufficiently.

Besides the *Epitome*, which, as we have seen, follows Abælard purely and simply, other *Sums*, which were doubtless written after Abælard's condemnation,

<sup>1</sup> HUG. A. S. VICT. *De Sacr.* i.; pars. viii.<sup>2</sup> c. iii. and iv.—*P.L.* clxxvi.; col. 307-309. *Cp. ibid.* 7-10; col. 310-312, and *De sacr. legis naturalis et scriptæ*; *ibid.* col. 29-30.

<sup>2</sup> *Cp. PORTALIÉ, Dict. de théol. cath. art. Abélard*, col. 49-55.

follow the general lines of his doctrine whilst endeavouring to accommodate it to orthodoxy. The *Summa Sententiarum*, which is now no longer ascribed by anybody to Hugo of St. Victor, and which evidently is the work of one of Abælard's disciples, is the first instance of such an attempt at accommodation. The author says as little as possible of the Atonement, and merely states that Christ came to condemn the devil and deliver man (*ut damnaret diabolum et hominem liberaret*), and that, in order to do this, He took both our body and our soul. As to the manner in which our deliverance was accomplished he says nothing, save that twice he tells us that Christ "merited for us."<sup>1</sup>

The *Sentences* of Roland Bandinelli,<sup>2</sup> though they have more to say, are scarcely more explicit. Speaking of the Eucharist, the author tells us that the sacrifices of the Old Law were the figure of a new and more perfect Sacrifice<sup>3</sup>; we may infer from this that Roland looked on Christ's death as a Sacrifice. Farther on, he states that the Incarnation sums up the whole mystery of our Salvation :

"In quo totius nostræ salutis ad liberationem summa videtur consistere."

Without further explaining the manner of our deliverance he immediately asks himself how God, who could have redeemed us otherwise, chose rather this means? He answers: because this means is the most apt to excite us to love and obedience:

"Hac itaque de causa hoc modo humanum genus voluit redi-

<sup>1</sup> Inter opp. HUG. *Sum. Sent.* i. 15.—*P.L.* clxxvi.; col. 70. *Cp. ibid.* i. 18; col. 77.

<sup>2</sup> Better known under his subsequent title, Alexander III. *Trans.*

<sup>3</sup> *Die Sentenzen Roland's* (Gietl's ed.), pp. 152-153.



mere, ut ad humilitatem et sui venerationem homines magis provocaret." <sup>1</sup>

Beyond this he says nothing. Father Gietl admits that "Roland betrays the influence of Abælard in that he puts Satisfaction in the second place" <sup>2</sup>—a kindly way of stating that Roland suppresses it altogether.

Another work which was written, though less directly, under Abælard's influence was the *Sum* of Robert Pullus; we feel this in his doctrine of the Atonement.

God, he says, delayed the Atonement that He might teach man to esteem the more this benefit, and, in order to prepare him, He sent him the prophets. But the Law was insufficient, and its sacrifices were unable to cleanse from sin. Hence Christ came, at once a perfect Victim and a perfect Priest:

"Unum pro multis, novum præ veteribus, rem pro figuris, sacrificium scilicet mei corporis inducens, dignumque tanto sacerdotium sacrificio."

He could have saved us otherwise, but the means He chose was the fittest because it best served to show His mercy. <sup>3</sup> This is said of the Incarnation, but, farther on, he explains Christ's death similarly:

"Non quod aliter redimere non poterat: verum ut quantitate pretii *quantitatem nobis sui innotesceret amoris nostrique peccati.*"

But he immediately goes on to say that His death was a Sacrifice, on account of which God delivers us from the yoke of the devil and forgives us our sins. <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Die Sentenzen Roland's*, pp. 157-159. See, in the footnotes, the parallel passages from OMNEBENE and from the *Sentences* of ST. FLORIAN.

<sup>2</sup> *Introd.* p. xxxiii.

<sup>3</sup> ROBERT PULL. *Sent.* lib. iii. 1-6.—*P.L.* clxxxvi.; col. 765-771 and *ibid.* 13-14; col. 778-780.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* iv. 13-15; col. 820-822.

Robert had moreover just stated that the Saviour is the Lamb who was slain and who takes away the sins of the world,<sup>1</sup> and he elsewhere seems to admit that His death had a penal value.<sup>2</sup>

To conclude, all these different writers, by the infrequency and relative poverty of their formulæ, testify to a backward movement in the development of the theology of the Atonement; they lay some stress on its moral fitness, and they do not deny its efficaciousness, but neither do they seek to explain it. In all this we feel Abælard's evil influence, from which even the more orthodox among his disciples were unable to shake themselves free. This also enables us to perceive the better how opportune were the refutations of which he was made the object, and the doctrinal reaction which he called forth. Such efforts were meritorious, nor were they without profit. The doctrine of the Atonement owes it to this controversy that its nature was better understood; St. Bernard explained several of its details and contributed to clear it from some misunderstandings, whilst Hugo of St. Victor finally brought back Christian minds to the school of St. Anselm. In fact, this struggle strengthened the basis of faith, enabling it to express itself better, and Theology, when the trial was over, was ready to gird herself up for the new progress in the future.

<sup>1</sup> ROBERT PULL. *Sent.* lib. iii. 28; col. 802.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 21; col. 794.

## CHAPTER XX

### FURTHER THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS—PETER LOMBARD, ALEXANDER HALES, AQUINAS

STRENGTHENED, though momentarily retarded, by Abælard's opposition, the doctrine of the Atonement, when once the crisis was past, was destined to take up in the quiet of the Schools the normal course of its development. We shall find indeed nothing novel, for the time for original work has already gone by, but the time for organisation is at hand and we shall now see how the traditional data will be, little by little, shaped and shaded and brought into that logical order which is usually associated with the elaborate theology of a dogma; in a word, how, by a series of efforts, from that of Peter Lombard to that of St. Thomas Aquinas, the various results of the Atonement commented on by the Fathers, together with the principle elaborated by St. Anselm, were combined in a handy synthesis to form the theology of the Atonement such as we know it now.

#### I

We cannot be expected to dwell here on the importance of the position occupied by Peter Lombard in the history of theology. Everybody knows that by uniting in his works the dialectics, for which Abælard's school was famous, with the orthodoxy of the school of St. Victor, and by basing everything on a selection of Patristic texts, comprising nearly all those known at his time, the "Master of Sentences"



became the real founder of Scholasticism. But on the subject of the Atonement his doctrine still betrays the influence of Abælard; this explains why his own influence on the doctrine in question was less than might have been expected.

The first idea which Peter Lombard connects with Christ's Passion is that of merit. Our crying need was the opening of Heaven's gates. The primary effect of Christ's Passion was to merit for Himself the glorification of His body and soul; but this He had already sufficiently merited by the virtues of His life. Hence, if He died, it was for us and not for Himself. His death was at once an example of virtue and the cause of Salvation:

“ . . . ut ipsius passio et mors tibi esset *forma et causa*: forma virtutis et humilitatis, causa gloriæ et libertatis: forma Deo usque ad mortem obediendi et causa tuæ liberationis ac beatitudinis.”

Thereby He merited for us heaven, and deliverance from sin and from Satan:

“ Meruit enim nobis per mortis ac passionis tolerantiam quod per præcedentia non meruerat, scilicet aditum paradisi et redemptionem a peccato, a pœna, a diabolo. . . . Ipse enim moriendo factus est hostia nostræ liberationis.”

God had decreed that man should never return to the lost paradise, unless there could be found a man to repair by his humility the havoc wrought by the pride of Adam. But no man was able to offer a sacrifice which should suffice for our reconciliation. This victim was, however, found in Christ:

“ Sed Christus homo sufficiens et perfecta fuit hostia, qui multo amplius est humiliatus . . . quam ille Adam superbiit.”

In fact our sin was so great that no other sacrifice

would have availed to save us. The Lombard quotes the text so often met in the Glosses :

“Tantum fuit peccatum nostrum ut salvari non possemus, nisi Unigenitus Dei filius pro nobis moreretur debitoribus mortis.”

But, being a good theologian, he immediately interprets it in the light of the following distinction :—

“Quod non ita intelligendum, quasi *non alio modo* salvari non potuerit quam per mortem suam, sed *quia per aliam hostiam* non potuit nobis aperiri regni aditus.”

He considers that he has thus in some way explained (*aliquatenus ostensum est*) how Christ's death opened to us the gates of heaven.<sup>1</sup>

From this we see that Peter Lombard bases Christ's merit on an objective and metaphysical aspect of His death, and that he explains it by having recourse to the old idea of sacrifice, combining rather ingeniously the ritual terminology with the moral reality of a *satisfacient* humility. What else is this than a restatement of the theory of Satisfaction? All historians have observed that Peter Lombard does not use St. Anselm's idea, and so far their statement is correct; but when they add that this was because he considered the idea to be insufficiently based on tradition<sup>2</sup> they are going beyond the mark. This is quite clear from the very reasoning adopted by the Lombard. He avoids, indeed, using the word satisfaction and prefers the less expressive but older figure of Sacrifice; in this he shows himself too scrupulous in his adhesion to ancient formalism, but at the same time we should not allow ourselves to be led astray by his words so far as to forget that he knows and uses the idea of Satisfaction.

<sup>1</sup> PET. LOMB. *Sent.* lib. iii. Dist. xviii.—*P.L.* cxcii. ; col. 793-5.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. RITSCHL, *op. cit.* i. pp. 56-7. HARNACK, *op. cit.* iii. pp. 377-8. BALTZER, *op. cit.* pp. 104-5.

In the next question Peter Lombard examines how by Christ's death we were redeemed from the devil, from sin, and from its penalty. He seeks in other words the manner in which was applied to us that Atonement, with the general principles of which he had dealt in the previous section.

Our Saviour delivered us from Satan by delivering us from sin ; how then are we delivered from sin and from death ? Here Abælard's ideas first make their appearance. Christ's death, says the Lombard, by manifesting the greatness of Divine Love, excites in us that charity which justifies us :

"Exhibita tantæ erga nos dilectionis arrha, et nos movemur accendimurque ad diligendum Deum, qui pro nobis tanta fecit ; et per hoc iustificamur, id est soluti a peccatis iusti efficimur. *Mors ergo Christi nos iustificat, dum per eam charitas excitatur in cordibus nostris.*"

We are also delivered in another fashion, by faith in the Passion (*per fidem in passionem*), as were the Hebrews who gazed on the brazen serpent. The Lombard does not lay much stress on this second explanation, of which the meaning is not clear, but which may probably, like the first, be reduced to a deliverance of the psychological and moral order, but he infers, following in this the lead of St. Augustine, that thus, by Christ's Sacrifice, all our sins were destroyed.<sup>1</sup>

Those same historians, who are so anxious to keep Peter Lombard aloof from St. Anselm's influence, are quite willing to allow that we here find reminiscences of Abælard.<sup>2</sup> It can certainly not be doubted that the doctrine which the Lombard has just laid down is that of Abælard ; but when we examine it closely we

<sup>1</sup> *Dist.* xix. 1-2 ; *ibid.* col. 795-796.

<sup>2</sup> HARNACK, *op. cit.* p. 378, note 2.



see that it here stands for something quite different. Abælard's intention was to express thereby the whole result of the Passion, whereas the Lombard is speaking of the personal and subjective application of the Atonement, the objective reality of which he has already proved. His opinion thus resolves itself into something neither wrong nor shallow. His only fault, one which subsequent commentators will not fail to notice, is that he does not clearly put these ideas in their due order. Such want of logic in a theologian who is usually so remarkably precise in his utterances could not fail to lead to unfortunate misunderstandings.

After having told us how the Passion frees us from sin, Peter Lombard adds that it also delivers us from the penalty. Eternal punishment is completely destroyed with the sin of which it is the result, but the temporal punishment will not disappear until the next life by the resurrection of the body :

“Ab æterna quidem [pœna] relaxando debitum: a temporali vero penitus nos liberabit in futuro.”<sup>1</sup>

But the penalty which is remitted to us was undergone in our stead by Christ on the Cross :

“Per ipsius pœnam, quam in cruce tulit, omnis pœna temporalis . . . in baptismo penitus relaxatur . . . et in pœnitentia minoratur.”

Christ's suffering suffices for what is wanting to the penance of the sinner :

“Non enim sufficeret illa pœna, qua pœnitentes ligat Ecclesia, nisi pœna Christi cooperaretur, qui pro nobis solvit.”

Thus Christ is our Mediator, and reconciles us with the Father ; but as the Lombard observes, following St. Augustine, this does not mean that God then

<sup>1</sup> BALTZER (*op. cit.* p. 96) gives this sentence the exactly opposite meaning.

began to love us, but rather that He then destroyed that sin which was an obstacle between ourselves and Him.<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, the Lombard asks whether God could have saved us otherwise, and he answers with St. Augustine that the Incarnation was not necessary, but that it was the fittest means, among other things, to lift our souls to the hope of everlasting life. Hence Christ was the perfect Victim offered to God for our reconciliation :

“Christus est sacerdos, idemque hostia et pretium nostræ reconciliationis, qui se in ara crucis non diabolo, sed Deo-Trinitati optulit, pro omnibus quantum ad pretii sufficientiam, sed pro electis tantum quantum ad efficientiam.”<sup>2</sup>

Did we wish, we could show that these same ideas—that of an expiatory sacrifice,<sup>3</sup> and that of a penal substitution<sup>4</sup>—are to be found in the commentaries in which Peter Lombard has brought together his recollections of the Fathers and of previous commentators; but it is useless to quote texts, which would only repeat, with no additions, the doctrines summarised in the *Sentences*.

Peter Lombard has deserved well by combining, or rather by classifying—for, as we have seen, the connection is not always quite apparent—those texts of the Fathers which bear on the Atonement. It is to him, also, that we owe the connection established between the idea of sin and that of penal substitution, a connection which had not been utilised by St. Anselm, and, besides this, certain well-found dis-

<sup>1</sup> *Dist.* xviii. 3-7; *ibid.* col. 796-798.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* xix. 1-2; *ibid.* col. 798-799.

<sup>3</sup> *2 Cor.* v. 21; *ibid.* col. 45. *Gal.* i. 4; col. 96. *Eph.* v. 2; col. 209. *Hebr.* ii.; col. 419.

<sup>4</sup> *Ps.* xxi. 6.—*P.L.* cxci. col. 229. *Ps.* lxviii. 6; col. 629.

tinctions which will be of help in the future. But, generally speaking, he is a strict conservative, his originality being restricted to matters of detail, so much so that he could not perceive how harmoniously St. Anselm's idea—which, no doubt, he considered too modern—would have fitted in with his system and supplied it with the depth and cohesion which it lacked. The book of *Sentences* is a conscientious and relatively methodical repertory of traditional ideas; this is sufficient to show its value, and at the same time its shortcomings.

## II

St. Anselm's doctrine had been kept too much in the background by Peter Lombard, but its influence was felt in various degrees by the Lombard's contemporaries. Richard of St. Victor, for instance, has incorporated into his treatise *De Verbo Incarnato*, amidst much unintelligible symbolism, a general outline of the scheme of the Atonement.

To explain how Christ was the "desired of the nations," Richard describes the different mental states existing previous to the Atonement. Some, he says, suffered from the darkness of idolatry without realising the extent of their bondage; others, better instructed, felt their captivity and the wound made by sin; but they knew no way of freeing themselves. Lastly, there were others, who understood the means of restoration, though they did not comprehend God's good pleasure. Richard considers only this last category. They had seen, by the light of reason and of faith, that had man not sinned he would have arrived at everlasting life. They could also see that, having once fallen, if he was restored to his lost



inheritance out of simple mercy he would not have profited thereby. For the devil could always taunt him with possessing things to which he had no right. Even supposing there were no devil, man's own conscience would reproach him, and shame him, with the recollection of the unrepaired fault. Hence Satisfaction was needed :

*"Perspicua igitur ratio docet quod sine satisfactione homo ad plenum reparari non posset."*

But to make this Satisfaction there was required a humility which should be as great as the pride which caused the Fall. The reader will duly appreciate this entirely moral aspect of Satisfaction, which agrees, in everything, with what we met in Peter Lombard, save that the latter avoids using the word :

*"Ad plenitudinem autem satisfactionis oportuit ut tanta esset humiliatio in expiatione quanta fuerat præsumptio in prævaricatione."*

The pride which was in man's sin could be repaired, only by the humiliation of a God :

*"Quando homo præsumpsit contra Deum, facta est elatio de imo ad summum. Oportuit ergo ut ad expiationis remedium fieret humiliatio de summo ad imum."*

For one reason, had man been redeemed by a creature, he would be under obligation to this creature, but this was not fit. Hence God was required :

*"Ad plenam restaurationem omnino non sufficeret persona quæ Deus non esset."*

But, on the other hand, a man was required, that the satisfaction might be applied to man, and also because it was man who was under sentence of death. An undeserved death was needed to acquit us of this debt :

*"Ad eiusdem debiti expiationem obediendo indebitam mortem pro debita solvere oportuit."*

Hence what was really required was a mediator who should unite in himself the two natures :

“ Ecce quo modo ex ratione colligitur quo modo oportuit mediatorem Dei et hominum verum Deum et verum hominem esse.”

Richard then goes on to prove by subtle arguments, through which we need not follow him, that this mediator could be no one else than the Son of God, and he concludes by assigning to each of the Persons of the Trinity, His exact place in the scheme of the Redemption :

“ Divisit itaque Trinitas negotium salutis humanæ, ut unam eamdemque hominis culpam Pater puniret, Filius expiaret, Spiritus Sanctus ignosceret. . . . Pater satisfactionem exigit, Filius exsolvit, Spiritus Sanctus se medium interposuit.”<sup>1</sup>

In such texts Harnack might be excused for finding traces of Gnosticism, and, though we should not think of describing them as heretical, it is not our business to defend them. But whatever we may think of such momentary aberrations, into which Richard was probably betrayed by inadvertence, our author's interpretations of Satisfaction are usually fairly correct, and sufficiently personal to be interesting. Not only does he retain the aspect of penal substitution, in this following Hugo, but he subordinates it to moral reparation. He also borrows from the *Cur Deus Homo* the idea of this Satisfaction being necessary, though he fails to give St. Anselm's metaphysical principle. From this we infer that Richard had a good deal in him of the populariser, and as such is faithful to the more superficial part of St. Anselm's doctrine, even to re-echoing its very exaggerations.

Another adaptation of St. Anselm's doctrine is to

<sup>1</sup> RICHARD, A S. VICT. *De Verbo incarn.* 8-11. P.L. cxcvi.; col. 1002-5.

be found in a commentary on the Song of Songs compiled by Gilbert Foliot, Bishop of London.

Man, he says, had sinned, and thereby deserved everlasting punishment. Had he remained faithful, he would have become for all eternity a partaker of the happiness of heaven ; hence justice requires that, having fallen, he should be eternally punished. This resulted in a strange conflict (*mirabilis obviatio*) between mercy and justice :

“ Misericordia et iustitia sibi contra venire cœperunt. . . . Ad pœnas hominem veritas exigebat, de cuius reparatione misericordia melius aliquid disponebat.”

First of all, justice got the best of it, and man was punished. But when justice had been to a great extent satisfied, mercy still claiming withal its rights, God decided to take into account the latter :

“ Cumque magna iam parte satisfactum esset iustitiæ . . . pulsanti semper et instanti plurimum misericordiæ tandem locus datus est in excelsis.”

The Father then decided to restore all things in Him by whom they had been created. This mission was accepted by the Son, and His submitting to undertake it is the more admirable because He is in all things equal to the Father. Hence He became obedient even to the cross, and by undergoing death for us He restored us to life. His precious blood was the redemption of our souls, and His sacrifice repaired Adam's guilty laxity. Hence even justice itself can now no longer complain :

“ Iustitiam misericordia osculatur: hic namque simul utrique satisfactum est, cum et homo, misericordia sic agente, redimitur, et iustitiæ longe plus quam debebatur exsolvitur.”

It might be objected that man had been sentenced to everlasting punishment whereas Christ only underwent a short Passion. To this we may easily



reply. Put into the scales the everlasting death of all mankind and the temporal death of the Son of God who takes their place (*in unitate et sacramento corporis et capitis*). Is it not clear that the latter is the greater? This is why our Saviour applies to Himself, and expounds to His Father, the words of the Prophet: "*Utinam appenderentur peccata in statera!*" (*Job* vi. 2).

"Pœna mea cum obedientia longe peccatis hominum præponderabit, et tibi [Deo] in expiationem culpæ eius et præstationem pœnæ . . . satis erit."<sup>1</sup>

Apart from the fanciful conflict between God's justice and mercy—and we cannot ascribe to St. Anselm the mistakes of his followers—the above shows us that the doctrine of Satisfaction was understood and expounded by Gilbert Foliot, even better than by Richard of St. Victor.

In the well-known theologian of the twelfth century, Alanus de Insulis, we find another distant disciple of St. Anselm. First, in one of his works there is to be found a traditional synthesis of the Atonement, composed without recourse to the idea of Satisfaction.

Before the coming of Christ, men were all slaves of sin and after their death descended to hell. To save mankind from everlasting death it was necessary to restore it, but such a restoration required the Incarnation of God:

"Ne ergo homo in æternum periret, restitui hominem oportebat; restitui autem non poterat, nisi Deus hominem assumeret."

For man, being a sinner, could not redeem himself. On the other hand, were an angel to redeem us we should be under an obligation to him and thus our

<sup>1</sup>GILB. FOLIOT, *Expositio in Cantic. cant.*—*P.L.* ccii. ; col. 1160-1162.

restoration would not be complete. This was why God became man. His undeserved death broke Satan's sovereignty and expiated our sins: "*Mors Christi peccati originalis apud Patrem hostia et propitiatio fuit.*"

That Christ delivered Himself for this twofold object appears to Alanus to be demonstrated by many proofs, especially by *Isaias*, chapter liii.<sup>1</sup>

In his *Articles of Catholic Faith*, in which he sums up the doctrines of the Church in the geometrical form of theorems and corollaries, in order to convince, as he says, by reason those minds who rebel against authority,<sup>2</sup> we find that the whole of the third book is devoted to the problem of the Atonement.

Man, he says, being weak, has a right to be mercifully dealt with by God; moreover God, having decreed that he should be associated with the angels, is morally bound to restore him after his fall. Divine justice could not, however, allow sin to go unpunished, hence Satisfaction was necessary. Again, as it was man who had sinned, this Satisfaction had to be made by man and by no other. But man could not make it, not only on account of the infinite enormity of sin, but also because all acts which he could accomplish were already due to God. Hence it was necessary that God should become man:

"Ergo oportuit Deum esse hominem qui satisfaceret pro creatura."

It was part of Christ's duty to offer Himself to God in man's stead. Moreover, seeing that a single sin deserved infinite punishment, and that there were not merely one but many sins to repair, the Saviour

<sup>1</sup> ALAN. DE INS. *Contra hæreticos*, iii. 19-20—*P.L.* ccx.; col. 418-420.

<sup>2</sup> *De art. cathol. fidei*, Prolog. *ibid.* col. 596-7.

was bound to undergo the greatest penalty possible. This was why Christ underwent death, which is the greatest of all human penalties. Hence He offered Himself to God as a Victim of expiation, and, as His Godhead gave an infinite worth to His sacrifice, His death sufficed to destroy the sins of all men.<sup>1</sup>

Alanus does not at all fully explain here in what consists Christ's Satisfaction. Concerning this we are told more under the word "Redeem," in a kind of theological dictionary written by him. It was Christ's humility, which made satisfaction, and paid the price for Adam's pride :

"Æquivalens pretium dedit Christus pro liberatione hominis, immo maius, quia maior fuit in Christo humilitas quam in Adam superbia." <sup>2</sup>

The reader will notice that this idea of a reparation by means of humility is becoming classical ; but speaking broadly, the doctrine of Alanus is merely a syllogistical summing-up of the *Cur Deus Homo*.

Ritschl protests against any impression that Anselm's theory was ever universally accepted, and he adds : "Even in the Middle Ages, thanks to the authority of Peter Lombard, Abælard prevailed over Anselm." <sup>3</sup>

This statement certainly does not apply to the end of the twelfth century, when, as we have just seen, Anselm's doctrine, down to its very exaggerations, was everywhere accepted. We shall be still less surprised to find it in a modified form dominating the minds of the great masters of the thirteenth century.

<sup>1</sup> *De art. cathol. fidei*, iii. 1-13 ; col. 609-612.

<sup>2</sup> *Dist. dict. theol. "Redimere"* ; *ibid.* col. 923.

<sup>3</sup> RITSCHL, *op. cit.* i. pp. 32-33.



## III

The brief summaries and partial adaptations with which we have just dealt, sufficed, in spite of Peter Lombard's influence, to keep theologians in contact with St. Anselm's thought. We shall now see how Alexander Hales introduced it, so to speak, officially into the teaching of the schools.

After having proved that human nature had fallen—though not beyond hope of relief—Alexander investigates whether its restoration was necessary. We must, he says, consider the necessity from two points of view: that of God and that of man. Moreover, a thing is necessary either because it is immutable, or, because it is inevitable (*Est enim quædam necessitas immutabilitatis et quædam necessitas inevitabilitatis*). This latter form of necessity manifestly cannot be attributed to God; but the former kind may. In this sense our redemption was necessary that the immutability of God's decrees might be safeguarded, but this form is not necessity properly so-called. In man neither of these necessities exist; but Alexander, presumably for the sake of symmetry, invents another—the necessity of indigence. By means of such distinctions he contrives to retain the word necessity, whilst practically rejecting the idea. But so far it is not quite clear whether God's decree to redeem the world was free or not.

Given the hypothesis of the Atonement, was Satisfaction necessary? Roughly speaking we may reply affirmatively. No doubt, *de potentia absoluta*, God could restore human nature without exacting any satisfaction, but He cannot do so having regard to His Justice, because, according to St. Anselm, this

would be to allow sin to go unpunished; an ill-ordered goodness and a real injustice :

“Sicut iustitia sine misericordia crudelis est et vitiosa, ita benignitas sine iustitia vitiosa est; et ita, si dimitteret peccatum sine satisfactione, ista benignitas esset iniustitia.”

But man cannot make satisfaction for himself, because he is a sinner. With regard to original sin there is a special and quite insurmountable difficulty; for as that sin comes to us from another, it is necessary that the temporal punishment for it should be paid by another.<sup>1</sup>

Nor could sin be repaired by an angel, both because man's dignity does not allow of his being subject to an angel, and also because no angel is powerful enough to make compensation for the whole human race. For a like reason any other creature is likewise incapable; for to make to God a fit reparation for the damage and insult committed against Him, something would have to be offered which is greater than anything which is not God.

“Ille qui poterit dare de suo aliquid maius quam omne quod non est Deus potest hanc satisfactionem facere, et non alius.”

Hence nothing remains save for a God-man to offer satisfaction :

“Necesse est ut satisfaciat Deus qui potest et homo qui debet : ergo debet satisfacere Deus homo.”

God could not—Alexander repeats this—allow sin to go unpunished, nor could He therefore offer a free pardon, without exacting satisfaction.<sup>2</sup>

By similar abstruse dialectics Alexander comes to the conclusion, that even had man not sinned, the Son of God would nevertheless have become incarnate.<sup>3</sup> After having thus demonstrated that Christ's Satis-

<sup>1</sup> ALEXAND. ALENS. *Summa theol.* pars. iii.<sup>a</sup> quæst. i. membrum i.-v.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* membr. vi.-vii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* quæst. ii. membr. xiii.

faction was required, our author goes on to show how it was brought about. Was the Passion necessary? Yes; given the Divine plan of our Salvation:

“Redemptio non potuit esse nisi per satisfactionem, nec satisfactio nisi per passionem.”

But it must not be forgotten that this plan depends on God's free-will. Hence, had Christ not died, man could not have been saved, because he could not have found elsewhere a sufficient ransom, and this too would all have happened according to the Divine Will. Was the Passion befitting? Yes; more especially did it beseem God's Justice which thus made the God-man pay the debt which man owed but was unable to pay:

“Homo enim non poterat reddere, sed debebat; Deus poterat, sed non debebat: oportuit ergo quod solveret homo-Deus, homo qui deberet, Deus qui posset.”

The value of Christ's Passion must be measured by the dignity of the Sufferer; on this account it sufficed to make Satisfaction for all.<sup>1</sup>

Alexander then reckons up its effects, of which the first is our Justification, and here he clearly indicates the objective and the subjective value. Objectively (*in rei natura*), our Saviour's death justifies us by meriting and by satisfying. In effect it merits grace and is an expiation which infinitely surpasses our faults. Subjectively (*secundum esse quod habet in animabus*), it justifies us in four ways: by love, by faith, by compassion, and by imitation; for it urges us to love, and to make satisfaction likewise for our own sins. Other results of the Passion are mentioned by Alexander: it reconciles us with God, it diminishes the power of the devil, and opens to us the gates of heaven.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ALEXAND. ALENS. *Summa theol.* pars. iii.<sup>a</sup> qu. xviii. membr. iii.-v.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* membr. vi.; art. 1-4.



It is scarcely needful to point out that Alexander Hales follows the *Cur Deus Homo* step by step. His work was to arrange the doctrine of that book under the titles which were soon to become classical. He did but little to perfect it, except in so far as Justification is concerned, in which his work is a decided improvement on that of the Lombard. He never penetrated into the innermost recesses of the mystery, and never even succeeded in quite explaining what he means by Satisfaction, and the two ideas of moral reparation and penal substitution appear confused to the extent that we cannot say which is the dominant one. But the worst of all is that, in dealing with the great question of the necessity of Satisfaction, instead of candidly disclaiming St. Anselm's exaggerations, he actually seems to narrow his Master's doctrine by his own rigid dialectics.<sup>1</sup> To sum up, Alexander was original merely in his formal arrangement of the matter. Peter Lombard had classified the Patristic texts, Alexander formulated, in the shape of theses, the rational arguments of St. Anselm, without however improving on them.

#### IV

Alexander Hales was the master of St. Bonaventure and the chosen model of St. Thomas Aquinas. Hence he exerted a far-reaching influence over the two greatest Doctors of the Middle Ages.

St. Bonaventure's doctrine of the Atonement is found in his commentary on the *Sentences*; as our readers are aware, commentaries, as then understood, allowed of authors expounding fully their own personal views. Bonaventure follows step by step the master's arrange-

<sup>1</sup> SCHWANE, *op. cit.* iv. p. 490.

ment of the questions—an arrangement which is by no means perfect—and thus he begins, when dealing with merit, by speaking of the efficaciousness of the Passion.

Christ, he says, merited by His whole life but more especially by His death. The excellent will which He showed in His death makes it meritorious far above all the sufferings of the saints.<sup>1</sup> Hence He gained merit for Himself and still more for us; first of all the opening of heaven's gate,<sup>2</sup> and secondly the forgiveness of sins. His death destroyed the account which was against us—by this expression our author wishes to convey that it destroys the need of punishment which follows sin—it also delivers us from Satan. By means of a mystic comparison, Bonaventure explains how the devil had two hands. With one he drew souls irresistibly into hell; this hand was cut off; with the other he tempted man, this hand was only weakened. The Passion also remits our punishment, everlasting punishment, completely, and temporal punishment also, though only partially.<sup>3</sup> In the same *Question* Bonaventure meets the text of Peter Lombard's in which we had remarked the influence of Abælard, and in which the forgiveness of sins is ascribed to the charity aroused in our hearts by the Passion. The commentator states this difficulty in a *dubium*, and answers that the subjective efficaciousness of charity presupposes the objective value of merit, otherwise it would be worthless:

“Et hæc quidem bona ratio est et sufficiens, priori supposita: per se autem non sufficit.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> BONAVENT. *In III. Sent. Dist. xviii.*; art. i. qu. 3. Quaracchi's Edition, p. 386.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* art. ii. q. 3; p. 392.

<sup>3</sup> *Dist. xix.*; art. i. q. 1-4; pp. 400-407.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid. Dist. xix.*; *dubium i.* p. 412.

After having thus explained the results of the Atonement according to the method adopted by the Master of Sentences, Bonaventure enters on the consideration of its requisites. Was the Atonement necessary? Bonaventure discreetly words the question so as to inquire "whether it was fit (*utrum congruum fuerit*) that human nature should be restored." Certainly, he replies, it was fit. In the first instance, such a restoration befits God; this he proves by four principles borrowed from St. Anselm. It did not beseem His immutability that His plans should be brought to naught; nor His goodness that all mankind should be damned for the sin of one; nor His wisdom that the noblest of His creatures should perish; nor His power that His servants should be unjustly held in thrall by another.

It was also fit, gauged from man's side; both because of man's dignity and because of his wretchedness, which, in God's eyes, already constituted a kind of expiation as well as an appeal to His mercy. In spite of this, Bonaventure considers himself obliged to retain St. Anselm's expression, even though he has already deprived it of its content, and he accordingly says that the Atonement was necessary by the necessity of immutability:

"*Non quacumque necessitate, sed necessitate immutabilitatis, quæ non opponitur libertati voluntatis, ac per hoc nec gratiæ nec liberalitati.*"<sup>1</sup>

Farther on St. Bonaventure likewise confines himself to asking, not whether Satisfaction was necessary, but, whether it was more fitting (*utrum magis congruerit*), and he follows Augustine and Anselm in replying affirmatively, both because God thus shows forth His mercy and His Justice and because this is

<sup>1</sup> *Dist. xx.; qu. 1, pp. 416-419.*



more conformable with our entire Justification and glorification.<sup>1</sup> But no creature could repair the sin of the human race. If we consider sin as an insult, no mere human reparation could counterbalance the outrage committed against God; if we consider the injury it does to God, no man can make satisfaction for the loss of the whole human race; hence what was needed was a God-man. St. Bonaventure would have kept well within the truth, had he clearly told us that he is taking for granted an actual decree of Providence to this effect.<sup>2</sup> This, however, he hints at in the next *Question* by stating that when personal sin is in question, man cannot offer for it complete satisfaction; but that, if God consents to forgive the sin, man can then make partial satisfaction (*semi-plenam*), by making reparation, with the help of God's grace, for the injury done to God. Thus Christ had to come to atone for original sin and to fill up by His merits what was wanting to our own partial Satisfaction.<sup>3</sup>

Lastly Bonaventure shows that the Atonement by means of the Passion was the fittest means that could be devised. He considers this means the best to appease the Divine wrath, to arouse man's love, and to vanquish Satan. Our Saviour's death was agreeable to God, because the greatest sacrifice that can be offered is that of one's life. Our Doctor also points out that this death was not inflicted or commanded by God, but was simply allowed and accepted:

“Non tradidit infligendo mortem vel præcipiendo . . . sed permittendo et voluntatem eius acceptando.”

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<sup>1</sup> *Dist.* xx.; qu. 2, pp. 419-422.

<sup>2</sup> Q. 3, p. 423.

<sup>3</sup> Q. 4, pp. 425-426.

Nor did God take pleasure in the penalty, but only in the love of the Sufferer :

“Deus non delectatur in pœna . . . delectatur tamen et placet sibi optima voluntas per quam pœna sustinetur et ad honorem Dei ordinatur.”<sup>1</sup>

But, notwithstanding the fitness of this means, God had others at His command, for His Almighty power has no bounds ; but, as for us, we have no choice. This is the sense—viz. as relatively to us and subsequently to the free decree of God—in which St. Bonaventure interprets the traditional texts which speak of the necessity of the Atonement :

“Auctoritates illæ intelliguntur ex parte nostra, præsupposita dispositione divina qua nos sic et non alio modo liberare decrevit.”<sup>2</sup>

The fourth objection is interesting as giving an excellent summary of St. Anselm's system. God, it is said, in order to restore the human race, unless He wishes to prove false to Himself, must do so justly. Hence He must have Satisfaction, and Satisfaction must be made by Christ. St. Bonaventure replies by denying the major, for God, as he says, could have granted us a free pardon without prejudice to His justice :

“Potuit liberare per viam misericordiæ, nec in hoc fuisset factum præiudicium iustitiæ. . . . Et ita, si sine satisfactione genus humanum liberasset, non propter hoc contra iustitiam fecisset.”

Still less can the Passion be described as necessary ; the slightest suffering of so great a Person would have been sufficient. God could possibly not have *redeemed* us otherwise, but He had many other means of *delivering* us.<sup>3</sup>

To complete our idea of St. Bonaventure's doctrine one thing is lacking, we do not yet know what

<sup>1</sup> Q. 5, pp. 427-429.

<sup>2</sup> Q. 6, pp. 431-432.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* qu. 6, ad 4<sup>um</sup>, p. 432.

exactly he implies by Satisfaction. He nowhere explains himself quite clearly, but his opinion may be inferred from the following text :—

“Nullus poterat Deum placare, quamvis voluntarie perferendo mortem posset Deo placere. . . . Christus autem, quia sine debito mortis pertulit mortem, et placere potuit et placare : *placere quia ex bona voluntate, placare vere quia præter necessitatem.*”<sup>1</sup>

From this it follows that, according to St. Bonaventure, Satisfaction requires two conditions, one being outward and the other inward. Hence it might be defined as a work of supererogation performed with love.

This proves that St. Bonaventure's doctrine was nowise different from that of Alexander Hales and St. Anselm. He sets himself the same questions, and resolves them according to the same principles ; but the tone of the answers has changed ; we hear no more of necessity but only of fitness. Thanks to the softening influence of Bonaventure, the too rigid doctrine of the *Cur Deus Homo* has at last been brought into the way of mildness, in which it will be definitively fixed by St. Thomas.

## V

The doctrine of Aquinas differs but little from that of St. Bonaventure. It is not even, as might be expected, better ordered. The commentary on the *Sentences* and the *Summa theologia* are both incomplete, and require to be brought together if we wish to have anything like a complete idea of his views.

Was the redemption of the human race necessary ? St. Thomas answers negatively ; but it was exceedingly fit both from God's point of view, on account

<sup>1</sup> *Dist.* xviii. ; *dubium* iv. 396.



of His mercy, power, and wisdom, and from the point of view of man, who had fallen through the fault of another. Was it necessary that God should demand Satisfaction? No; but this too was fit, both in order to manifest God's justice and in order to restore man more completely even in his own sight, and also to re-establish in the world the normal course of things:

“Congruum . . . ex parte Dei, quia, in hoc divina iustitia manifestatur, quod culpa per pœnam diluitur . . . ; ex parte hominis, qui satisfaciens perfectius integratur . . . ; etiam ex parte universi, ut scilicet culpa per pœnam satisfactionis ordinetur et sic nihil inordinatum in universo remaneat.”<sup>1</sup>

St. Thomas has not thought fit to deal with these questions in the *Summa*, though he there touches on the last, when proving the rights of the Divine mercy. God could freely pardon sin without in any way prejudicing His Justice. It is argued indeed, that human judges must, under penalty of being unjust, punish misdeeds; but this is only because they are the guardians of a higher good, whereas God is Himself the supreme Good. Hence He can pardon without demanding any Satisfaction, just as any man can, without injustice, forgive a personal insult.<sup>2</sup>

Was the Incarnation necessary? St. Thomas naturally rejects any idea of its absolute necessity, but he maintains that it too was most fit; both in order to lead us to good; to urge us to greater faith, hope, and charity; to set us an example; and in order to deliver us from evil, and more especially to expiate our sins. A common man could not make satisfaction for our sins, the reason being that sin has in it a kind of infinity (*quamdam infinitatem habet*), because

<sup>1</sup> THOM. AQUIN. *In III. Sent.* Dist. xx. q. 1, art. 1. Solutio i. and ii.

<sup>2</sup> *Sum. theol.* 3<sup>a</sup> pars. q. 46, art. 2 ad 3<sup>um</sup>.

it is committed against God, who is infinite. Sin, moreover, has corrupted the whole human race, whereas a man is unable to make satisfaction for himself alone. Hence the Incarnation was in itself something fit; it even becomes a necessity granted the hypothesis—which is now a fact—that God exacts adequate Satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

We must say the same of the Passion. It was not necessary, save subsequently to the Divine decree which decided it, but it was most fit, not only as a means of safeguarding the rights both of Justice and Mercy, but also on account of the immense benefits which accrue to us through it :

“*Multa concurrerunt ad salutem hominis pertinentia præter liberationem a peccatis.*”

Hence, theoretically, God had at His command many methods for effecting our salvation, but practically, and so far as we are concerned, there was no other means.<sup>2</sup>

Having seen what St. Thomas's doctrine was concerning the conditions of Salvation, we may now seek how, according to him, our Salvation was actually wrought. The Angelic Doctor first considers the Passion in itself, and points out the immensity of Christ's sufferings. Christ suffered in His body and in His soul. He suffered in all His senses and for all men. This accounts for the Passion being, of all sufferings the greatest, both by reason of its cruelty and by reason of His great sensibility, though we must beware of thinking for an instant that it reached the higher part of His soul or deprived Him

<sup>1</sup> *Sum. theol.* iii. p. q. 1, art. 2. *Cp. III. Sent.* Dist. i. q. 1, art. 2 and Dist. xx. q. 1, art. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* q. 46, art. 1-3. *Cp. III. Sent.* Dist. xx. q. 1, art. 3 and 4.

of the beatific vision.<sup>1</sup> St. Thomas also points out that the essential quality of the Passion was its freedom, which, by the way, is not incompatible with obedience. Christ really delivered Himself up, though He accepted, in obedience and love, His Father's Will. When we say that the Father delivered Him we only mean that He inspired and permitted His sacrifice.<sup>2</sup>

To these moral dispositions which form the human value of our Saviour's death, His Godhead adds an infinite price whence results our Salvation. Christ's death reacts on us as a merit, because He is the head of a body of which we are the members, and it is also a Satisfaction, a Sacrifice, and a redemption.<sup>3</sup> We see that St. Thomas here enumerates, without classifying them, the current sayings, an enumeration which, by the way, has resulted in his being accused of heaping together contradictory ideas.<sup>4</sup> As a matter of fact the contradiction is only on the surface, for these different words merely render different aspects of the same reality; the idea of redemption and that of Sacrifice both being reducible to the idea of Satisfaction; and the latter resulting from the extent of the sufferings undergone in the Passion, from the dignity of the Sufferer, and from the love which He therein showed. M. Sabatier opines that St. Thomas's idea of Satisfaction is based "on Roman Law" and is "a Satisfaction made through the legal punishment, deserved and undergone."<sup>5</sup> On the contrary Harnack

<sup>1</sup> *Sum. th.* q. 46, art. 5-8.

<sup>2</sup> Q. 47, art. 1-3. *Cp. III. Sent. Dist. xx.* q. 1, art. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Q. 48, art. 1-5. *Cp. ibid.* q. 22, art. 2 and 3, q. 49 art. 1 and *III. Sent. Dist. xviii.* q. 1, art. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Cp. RITSCHL, op. cit.* p. 31. HARNACK, p. 476. SABATIER, p. 61, note 1.

<sup>5</sup> SABATIER, *op. cit.* p. 59.



is of opinion that such an idea scarcely ever makes its appearance in St. Thomas.<sup>1</sup> In this opinion he is correct, but he is wrong in desiderating anything else. As we have seen, the idea of substitution, though it is well founded, is relatively less important, and only superficial theologians could think of it as the one thing necessary. St. Thomas saw clearly that the Passion, though it was a penalty, and the penalty of our sins, was more particularly a grand act of obedience and love. This was why he took care not to make Satisfaction consist in a mere penal verdict, but followed Anselm's lead in making it a work of a high moral order.

Thanks to this Satisfaction we were delivered from sin, snatched from Satan, and reconciled with God. In other words we, all of us, benefit by the merits of Christ our head and this by reason of a solidarity established by God Himself. We are thus dispensed from undergoing any penalty, for Christ's satisfaction was not merely sufficient but superabundant. Yet with respect to the sins which we commit after baptism, we must expiate them by personal satisfaction by which we unite ourselves in a certain fashion to Christ's Passion.<sup>2</sup>

In this manner St. Thomas avoids any exaggeration; he admits the great fitness of the Passion, though he does not state it to be necessary; he maintains the objectivity and the superabundance of the Atonement, though he does not allow this to interfere with our own twofold collaboration. Possibly his wise reserve may be the reason why certain historians consider his doctrine to lack order and stability.<sup>3</sup> No doubt they

<sup>1</sup> HARNACK, *op. cit.* iii. pp. 478-479.

<sup>2</sup> *Sum. th.* 3<sup>a</sup> pars. q. 49, art. 1-6. *Cp. III. Sent.* Dist. xix.

<sup>3</sup> *Cp. HARNACK, op. cit.* iii. pp. 480-481. SABATIER, *op. cit.* p. 61, note 1.

would prefer him to have upheld a system as absolute as that of Anselm, for then it would have been an easy task for them to demonstrate its unreality. As for us, our preference is for St. Thomas and for his delicate sense of shades and distinctions, which after all is merely the art of rendering aright the complexity of reality.

## VI

But this doctrine, in which Aquinas had succeeded in adjusting in due equilibrium the different elements of an extraordinarily complex problem, was soon to be threatened by the subtle dialectics of Duns Scot. Under the pretext of criticising St. Anselm's exaggerations, the great Franciscan Doctor subjected to a merciless criticism even those metaphysical and dogmatic principles which had been respected by St. Thomas.

According to Scot the Atonement was no wise necessary, and even granted that God wished to save mankind He could have remitted all Satisfaction; for the plan of Salvation is an effect of God's free-will. So far Scot is in agreement with the Schoolmen of the milder party of Bonaventure and St. Thomas. But Scot goes further, and impugns even the relative necessity of the Incarnation; according to him a mere creature, properly gifted with grace, would be capable of making a sufficient atonement, supposing God to require it; for it is untrue that the grievousness of sin is in any sense infinite. Moreover Christ's Satisfaction was not infinite, for our Saviour only suffered in His human nature; it only becomes infinite through its benevolent acceptance by God, who deigns to consider it as such. Hence

Scot does away with all intrinsic necessity and subordinates everything to God's free-will.<sup>1</sup>

Protestant historians rejoice to find in the strictures of Duns Scot an anticipation of Socinianism,<sup>2</sup> and this no doubt explains why they attach so much importance to Scot's views. But as a matter of fact Scot's arguments are subtle rather than deep. He diminishes the grievousness of sin; he lowers our Saviour to the condition of a creature, since the value of His merit depends wholly on God's acceptance. To do so is to forget that every action of the God-man, by reason of the hypostatic union, has the infinite worth of the Divine Person from which it proceeds. In Scot's system—here we for once find Harnack agreeing with Schwane—there was an unfortunate tendency to Nestorianism.<sup>3</sup> On the philosophy both of sin and of the Incarnation St. Thomas's doctrine is both deeper and more conformable with Catholic tradition. He maintains the infinite grievousness of sin and the infinite superabundance of Christ's Satisfaction, thus throwing light at once on the reason and on the unspeakable efficaciousness of the Atonement. Both these things are scouted by Scot, who, in consequence of this, belittles the mystery, if indeed he does not shake it to its very foundations.

Hence the reader will not be surprised to learn that very few adopted the view of Duns Scot. Harnack indeed states that "the Scotist theory gained more and more adherents in the fourteenth century; that by means of the formal dialectics of some it was exaggerated even to the verge of blas-

<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed exposal and criticism of the theory, see SCHWANE, iv. pp. 514-520.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. SABATIER, *op. cit.* p. 63. Cp. p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. HARNACK, *op. cit.* p. 482, note 2, and SCHWANE, p. 520.



phemy, and that it exerted its influence even on the Thomists.”<sup>1</sup> But Harnack makes no attempt to prove his statement whilst the only disciples of Scot known to Dr. Schwane in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are “a few theologians such as Durandus and Aureolus.”<sup>2</sup>

It may be observed that several determined Scotists—such as Mastrius, Hauzeur, Frassenius, Humo, and others—even endeavoured to mitigate the master’s doctrine concerning Christ’s merits and their acceptance by God. Recollecting Scot’s words :

“In commendando Christum malo excedere quam deficere a laude sibi debita, si propter ignorantiam oporteat in alterum incidere,”

they preferred to consider this good intention, rather than stick to the literal meaning of his words :

“Respiciendum potius ad illam eius intentionem quam serpere eius sensum litteralem.”<sup>3</sup>

All that we can say, is that their interpretation, however well meant, is unfounded, though it serves to show how faithful Catholic theology remained to the doctrine of St. Thomas. At a later date Suarez was to write that the real and intrinsic infinity of Christ’s merits is so certain, that the “contrary opinion seems neither probable, pious nor in sufficient agreement with the faith.”<sup>4</sup>

But though Scot’s doctrine found few followers, it was none the less helpful indirectly in calling forth refutations both many and lengthy. Since the sixteenth century, theologians do not consider their task

<sup>1</sup> HARNACK, *op. cit.* p. 483.

<sup>2</sup> SCHWANE, *op. cit.* p. 521.

<sup>3</sup> *Cp.* BONAVENT. (Quaracchi’s edition), *Scholia* of the Editors, iii. pp. 429-430.

<sup>4</sup> SUAREZ, *De Incarnat.* Disp. iv. sect. 3, concl. 3, n. 11.

at an end when they have proved the superabundance of Christ's Satisfaction; they also seek to determine whether it is conformable with justice, with strict justice (*ad strictos juris apices*), and with commutative justice.<sup>1</sup> It is scarcely necessary to point out that the importance of such questions is not commensurate with the amount of room they occupy in our hand-books, and that, without our doctrine thereby suffering in the least we may bring its history to a close at the point where it was left by St. Thomas, for then it was that St. Anselm's system received its finishing touch and definitively took its place in our theology.

Glancing back over the Middle Ages we find that it was then that the Atonement first claimed separate consideration by theology. It then began to be perceived that desultory comments on the Scripture-texts dealing with this mystery, and casual references in the course of a homily to the traditional metaphors, were insufficient. The problem was felt to be one deserving more serious treatment; hence the classification of the different aspects of the Atonement; hence, too, St. Anselm's treatise.

This treatise is based on an analysis of sin, which is now seen to be a moral disorder and offence against God, not only by reason of its consequences, but in its very essence. This being so, it was natural that St. Anselm should look on Christ's death as an act of reparation through obedience and love, and that, to the mystical expressions: redemption or ransom, sacrifice and expiation, which till then were the only ones in use to express its value, he should prefer the highly moral idea and term of Satisfaction. Now that the question had been examined more closely it is not surprising to find that the answer was more exact.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. DÖERHOLT, *op. cit.* pp. 424-488.

The analysis of sin also results in showing that its wickedness is in some sense boundless, because it is directed against the Infinite, and that, in consequence of this, God alone could repair it. But sin once destroyed, all its consequences likewise vanished ; we are redeemed, reconciled, and delivered from everlasting death ; what is more, Christ's merits are a guarantee of God's favour and love. Hence Salvation is wholly bound up with the forgiveness of sins and remains therefore dependent on the Satisfaction which God awaited from His Son's death. The key being now discovered all the rest becomes evident. There are, however, some good people who consider that thereby the question was illegitimately narrowed, and that there is more real grandeur in those eloquent syntheses, in which the Fathers described Salvation as the work of the whole mission of the Word. But this objection is unfounded ; it was high time to express the doctrine in more rigorously logical terms, and in this the work of the Schoolmen consisted. They were not unaware of the benefits secured to us by the Incarnation, but they devoted their attention more especially to Christ's death. In so doing they took their stand in the very centre of the problem, and were thus enabled to perceive the better what was the essence and what the cause of Salvation. In a word, their work was done scientifically and their shortcomings were merely the shortcomings inherent in their method, for can any science exist without some degree of abstraction and narrowing of issues ? What is lost in breadth is, however, gained in depth.

But as a matter of fact the problem discussed in the Middle Ages was the same as that dealt with by the Fathers—that, namely, which was suggested



to Christian thought by St. Paul and by the Gospels—viz. the relation which exists between Christ's death and the forgiveness of sins. The Fathers, as we saw, explain this relationship by means of the ritual idea of sacrifice, or else by means of the legal idea of penal substitution. The Middle Ages, following the lines laid down by St. Anselm, sought the metaphysical reason of this legal processus, and brought out the latent moral truths which were concealed beneath the ritual terminology. Hence the doctrine of satisfaction was new only in its form; in reality it was merely a simpler and a deeper restatement of traditional ideas.

To sum up, we owe to the Middle Ages a special treatise on the Atonement, based on a better understanding of sin, and which issued in a higher idea of the supernatural efficaciousness and relative necessity of the death of the God-man. Scholasticism, in thus producing a theology of the Atonement, merely explored more deeply, and co-ordinated, the doctrinal data supplied by the Fathers.

# PART THE FIFTH

## THE RIGHTS OF THE DEVIL

### CHAPTER XXI

THE LEGAL FORM: THE RANSOM THEORY  
ORIGEN, ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA

WE have followed, without ever deviating into side issues, the different stages of the doctrine of the Atonement from its starting-point in Scripture until its definitive statement in mediæval times. Our task would therefore seem to be finished. There is, however, one question which we frequently met in company with our doctrine, but which we felt it necessary to waive, lest it should interfere with our work. As this question, that of the devil's rights, is intimately connected with the doctrine of the Atonement we feel it our duty to give its history, although this will involve our travelling a second time over the same ground.

The question arose as follows:—God and Satan are as it were two masters who contend for the possession of mankind. Hence men by departing from God fell under Satan's power, by whom they are now kept in bondage. As, moreover, men had fallen into his power, not unwillingly, but of their own choice, may we not say that the devil has over them a real right, a right of property and a right of conquest? Hence, when God decided to free Satan's captives, was He not bound in justice to recognise

and take into consideration the devil's rights? Many of the Fathers answered this question affirmatively.

Christ certainly gave Himself out as Satan's adversary. We cannot fail to see that it is Himself that He describes under the figure of the stronger one who overcomes the strong man and takes away his armour and rifles his goods (MATT. xii. 29; LUKE xi. 22). Speaking generally, according to the Gospel, the kingdom of God, of which Christ is the founder, progresses by the gradual overcoming of the kingdom of Satan.<sup>1</sup> This is how St. John comes to say that Christ came "that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 *John* iii. 8), whilst St. Paul describes Him as "despoiling the principalities and powers and exposing them confidently in open show" (*Col.* ii. 15). Elsewhere our Lord Himself seems to give implicit sanction to the devil's rights when He says: "The prince of this world cometh and in me he hath not anything" (*JOHN* xiv. 30). If the devil has no right over Christ, does this not show that he has some right over us? This is the reason, no doubt, why the defeat of Satan is described as a judgment (*JOHN*. xii. 31)—*i.e.* as a condemnation. Lastly, can the many texts in which the word "redemption" or "ransom" occurs, refer to aught save to a ransom paid to the devil, who, through sin, had become the possessor, if not indeed the rightful owner, of our souls? Thus there came to be built on these Scripture-texts a theory, or rather a regular system, to which, however, more was contributed by fancy than by reason.

Our opponents are fond of lingering over this singular system. Ritschl and Harnack represent it as one of the most important forms, Lichten-

<sup>1</sup> *Cp.* ROSE, *op. cit.* pp. 103-107.



berger and Sabatier as almost the only form of early Christian thought. Naturally enough, they find in it an excuse for deriding the simplicity of that unfortunate Catholic Church, who, for so long, put her trust in conceptions so utterly childish and absurd. M. Sabatier sees in it an evident "product of mythological habits of thinking which persisted well into the Christian era and enslaved the imagination of the early Christians."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps our readers will wonder why we have not dealt before with a matter of such gravity. We reserved it until now because we wished to treat it fully, and because we are under the impression that, notwithstanding the extent to which this view invaded the domains of theology, it never succeeded in monopolising Christian thought. This was why, so far, we confined ourselves to showing that, side by side with the theory of the devil's rights, and quite independently of it, another doctrine, which is the Church's own, was growing apace. We have studied the growth of the seed of truth; we have watched it from its humble beginning to its rich harvest; it is now our duty to turn our attention to the rank weeds which have grown up in its midst.

## I

St. Irenæus was the first of the Fathers to speak of the devil's rights. According to Irenæus the death and sin which held man in thrall were no mere abstractions; besides being physically real they were personified. Death and the devil are synonyms, and St. Irenæus used the

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 90. *Cp.* p. 45. Note 1: "The supernaturalism of the Fathers was merely a result of their mythological habits of mind."

words indiscriminately. This being so the devil is our great enemy. He is the tyrant who holds sinners captive, and, ever since Adam's fall, every man is a sinner: "By sin we were reduced to bondage; we were all of us captives of Death" (iii. 18, 7). A first consequence of this is, that, just as man had been vanquished by the devil, so the devil would in his turn be vanquished by a man:

"Quoniam in initio homini suasit transgredi præceptum factoris, ideo eum habuit in sua potestate . . . ; per hominem ipsum iterum oportebat victum eum contrario colligari iisdem vinculis, quibus alligavit hominem . . ." (v. 21, 3).

This was demanded by justice: "*Neque enim iuste victus fuisset inimicus, nisi ex muliere homo esset qui vicit eum*" (*ibid.* 1).<sup>1</sup>

But what is more, Satan had acquired a certain right over man. No doubt this right was an unjust one—this is clearly stated by Irenæus—for it was based on a lie and hence God committed no injustice in rescuing from the devil his victims (iii. 23, 1). Nevertheless God consented to come to terms. The devil's sovereignty was not according to law; by nature we belonged to God, from whom the devil had stolen us to make us his own disciples. But the Word of God, who is almighty, is also infinitely just; hence He willed to act justly even with the devil when taking away from him what really belonged to God: "*Non deficiens in sua iustitia, iuste etiam adversus ipsam conversus est apostasiam, ea quæ sunt sua redimens ab ea.*"

He would not consent to treat the devil in the way the devil had treated us—*i.e.* He preferred to work by persuasion as it befitted God to work:

<sup>1</sup> See the same idea, expressed in different words, in iii. 18, 7.

*“Secundum suadelam, quemadmodum decebat Deum suadentem et non vim inferentem.”*

In this wise he succeeded in saving His creatures without infringing the rules of strictest justice (v. i. 1).

In what did the Divine persuasion consist? Irenæus does not leave us in any doubt as to his opinion; it consisted in God Himself buying us at the price of His blood, Himself becoming our ransom:

*“Sanguine suo rationabiliter redimens nos, redemptionem semetipsum dedit pro his qui in captivitatem ducti sunt” (ibid.).*

Irenæus does not tell us to whom this ransom was given. He even says elsewhere that we were debtors only to God, whose commandments we had transgressed (v. 16, 3; *cp.* v. 17, 1). Are we then to believe that Irenæus was unable to explain how we were redeemed from the devil<sup>1</sup> or in what the “persuasion” of God consisted? Did Irenæus really mean that Christ’s life was given to the devil as the price of our redemption? He does not actually say so but he comes very near the admission. Though he never seems to have actually fallen into this childish error, he could scarcely have gone a step further, without so doing.

At any rate, and whatever the method may have been, “the Atonement was, so far as the devil was concerned, an act of justice, and so far as it concerned us, an act of mercy” (v. 2, 1), of which the ultimate result was the defeat of the devil and man’s deliverance. Christ overcame the strong man and rifled his house. “The devil who unjustly kept man captive was himself most justly made a prisoner, and

<sup>1</sup> *Cp.* v. 2, 1: “Quantum attinet ad apostasiam, iuste suo sanguine redimens nos ab ea.”



God's mercy delivered man from the power of his oppressor" (v. 21, 3).

To sum up, St. Irenæus did not fall into the same excesses as some of his successors. But he laid down the principle that the devil should be treated according to the laws of justice, from which he inferred the two main consequences that he was to be vanquished by a man, and in some sense repaid for the loss of his rights. This thesis of the Doctor of Lyons will assume a new form in passing through the brilliant mind of Origen.

## II

"Christ is our Redeemer because, having fallen into captivity, we stood in need of a ransom."<sup>1</sup> The very terms of this abstract principle show that, according to Origen, our redemption is no mere metaphor but a reality of which his whole system is an elaboration.

Man had been created free. God had put him between life and death that he might seal his destiny by his own choice. He chose death and delivered himself to the devil. Our soul cannot be without a master, and as soon as it escapes from the yoke of Christ it is brought under that of Satan. This bondage of sin is viewed by Origen as a real slavery; the devil being the creditor to whom we all are debtors. "We all are debtors, having a bill against us, and even after our first bill has been paid how many new ones does not each of us incur again."<sup>2</sup> The devil is a master of whom we are the slaves. "The soul which God had created free, reduces itself

<sup>1</sup> ORIGEN, *In Ioan.* i. 39.—*P.G.* xiv. ; col. 91.

<sup>2</sup> *In Ierem. hom.* xv. 4.—*P.G.* xiii. ; col. 433.

to slavery ; it hands over to the devil the charter of immortality which it had received from God and from the devil it accepts a new grant ; it signs away its freedom, in order to receive the yoke of sin and the sovereignty of death.”<sup>1</sup>

We belong to the devil as a piece of goods belongs to its purchaser. “We are God’s creatures, but by our misdeeds we turn our backs on our Creator and sell ourselves to sin. Hence we belong to God because He created us, but we have become the slaves of Satan because we have sold ourselves to sin. This is why God was literally able to redeem us ; by so doing He restored to Himself what was His by creation, and yet at the same time, in a sense, He bought someone else’s goods, because through sin we had given ourselves to another master.” Origen even tells us with what currency the devil had bought us. “His coin, the coin which bears his image on it, is murder, adultery, thieving, and in general all forms of sin. Such is the devil’s money of which his treasury is, alas, all too full. With this money he bought us and received a deed of ownership over us (*chirographum decreti*).”<sup>2</sup>

This odd idea of the financial rights of the devil leads Origen to use a still more curious figure. “The devil has his own frontier-police, who are charged to examine each one of us to see what they can seize. Woe betide him who is unfortunate enough to have only debts and nothing with which to pay them. Christ alone was able to say : ‘*Venit princeps mundi istius et in me habet nihil.*’”<sup>3</sup> Nor is there in this latter power of the demon anything to surprise us.

<sup>1</sup> In *Rom.* v. 3.—*P.G.* xiv. ; col. 1026.

<sup>2</sup> In *Exod. hom.* vi. 9.—*P.G.* xii. ; col. 338.

<sup>3</sup> In *Luc. hom.* xxiii.—*P.G.* xiii. ; col. 1862.

Granting that he has so many rights over us, is it not necessary that he possess also some means of enforcing them ?

Christ came to rescue our souls from this bondage, but it behoved Him first to give a price to the devil. "We were sold to sin, He redeemed us with His own blood from him who had bought us."<sup>1</sup> This redemption is as literally true as was our bondage ; Origen explains this at length : "We term ransom that money which is paid to the enemy to free the captives he holds. The human race was such a captive, having been vanquished in the conflict with sin and taken prisoner by the devil. Christ became our ransom, that is, He delivered Himself to our enemies. He shed all His precious blood for which the devil thirsted."<sup>2</sup> "His blood did not quench his thirst, but it broke his might."<sup>3</sup>

Hence it was to the devil that Christ gave His blood and His very soul. "Our Saviour went so far as to give His soul for the redemption of many. But to whom did He give His soul ? Not to God surely. *Hence to whom, save the devil ?* For Satan indeed held us until Christ's soul was given to him as the ransom for our deliverance. . . . Hence it was not with gold or with perishable money that we were redeemed, but with the precious blood of Christ. It was the soul of the Son of God that was given for our ransom and not His spirit ; according to LUKE xxiii. 46, He had already yielded the latter

<sup>1</sup> *In Ioan.* vi. 35. *P.G.* xiv. ; col. 292.

<sup>2</sup> *In Rom.* iii. 7. *Ibid.* col. 945.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* iv. 11. *Ibid.* col. 1000 : "*Origenes recte illud exponit, quo modo et diabolus quadam pecunia sua, hoc est peccatis, emptos sibi nos in servitutem redegerit, et Christus postea sanguinis sui pretio redemerit*" (*PETAVIUS, De Inc. Verb.* lib. ii. v. 10). Personally we have our doubts.



to His Father ; nor again His body, for we find nothing of this in Scripture.”<sup>1</sup>

Elsewhere Origen unfolds the same idea in quasi-scholastic fashion :

“Fatemini sine dubio verum esse quod scriptum est in Ep. Petri: quia redempti sumus non corruptibili pretio argenti et auri, sed pretioso sanguine Unigeniti. Si ergo pretio empti sumus, ut etiam Paulus astipulatur, ab aliquo sine dubio empti sumus, cuius eramus servi, qui et pretium poposcit quod voluit, ut de potestate dimitteret quos tenebat. Tenebat autem nos diabolus, cui distracti fueramus peccatis nostris. *Poposcit ergo pretium nostrum sanguinem Christi.*”

This is why, before our Saviour's Passion, each one had to shed his own blood in circumcision as a pledge of the future redemption. But, ever since, we have no need of such rites. Christ's blood of itself sufficed for the redemption of all.<sup>2</sup> Nor would any other blood have availed to save us. “Man had naught to give in exchange for his captive soul so as to free it; God, in exchange for the souls of all of us, gave the precious blood of Christ, by which we have been bought at a great price.”<sup>3</sup> “One alone could give an equivalent for our long-lost soul, He namely, who bought us at the cost of His precious blood.”<sup>4</sup>

But Origen also tells us that the devil made a mistake and that Christ's soul escaped from his clutches. Satan had thought to secure Christ's soul, not foreseeing the agony which His presence would cause. Christ is free among the dead (*Ps. lxxxvii. 5*), and stronger than the power of death. Hence His soul could not remain in the devil's power, for it is

<sup>1</sup> *In Matth. xvi. 8. P.G. xiii. 1397-1400.*

<sup>2</sup> *In Rom. ii. 13. P.G. xiv. 911.*

<sup>3</sup> *In Matth. xii. 28. P.G. xiii. ; col. 1044-1045.*

<sup>4</sup> *Exh. ad martyr. 12. P.G. xi. ; col. 580.*

written in the Psalms "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell"<sup>1</sup> (*Ps.* xv. 10). Christ in rising again also broke the might of death. The devil had plotted His death, fearing that through His teaching the human race might forsake him; it never entered into Satan's calculations that Christ's death would rescue many more than had been saved by His doctrine and miracles.<sup>2</sup> God the Father delivered His Son to the devil and the latter brought about His death, that thereby he might obtain over Him that power which he has over all Adam's children. Thus the devil unwittingly brought about his own ruin, by receiving into his abode the Son of God, who rose again the third day, and breaking down the gates of Hell made us partakers of His own resurrection.<sup>3</sup>

This was how Origen explained the devil's rights. He nowhere adopts the legal principle laid down by St. Irenæus, but he clearly makes the statement which St. Irenæus did not venture on—viz. that the devil only yielded up his captives after having demanded and obtained Christ's soul as a ransom.<sup>4</sup>

Origen's theory, even in his own day, found gain-sayers. The dialogue *De recta in Deum fide*, which was wrongly ascribed to Origen, and which really belongs to some unknown anti-gnostic writer of the end of the third century, when dealing with Marcion speaks of the devil as follows:—

Megethius the Marcionite endeavours to prove conformably with his system that we were strangers

<sup>1</sup> *In Matth.* xvi. 8.—*P.G.* xiii. ; col. 1397.

<sup>2</sup> *In Matth. Series*, 75 ; col. 1720.

<sup>3</sup> *In Matth.* xiii. 8. *Ibid.* col. 1116-1117.

<sup>4</sup> SCHWANE-DEGERT, *Hist. des dogmes*, i. p. 342, says that "all the other Fathers are against this odd way of expressing a thought which in itself is true." Unfortunately this writer does not back up his statement by any texts.

to Christ, since according to St. Paul He bought us. Now, nobody can buy anything which already belongs to him ; thence we were strangers.

There then follows the reply of Adamantius, the orthodox interlocutor who stands for Origen : “ You just said that Christ was the buyer ; who then was the vendor ? Have you forgotten the saying that ‘ he who sells and he who buys are brothers ’ ? If the devil, who is evil, sold something to Christ, who is good, then he is no longer evil but good. He who had laid snares for man even from the beginning, is no longer a seducer, for he has given over his prey to the good God. Hence having laid aside his malice and his perverse designs he must now be called righteous. We come in this wise to say that God was the vendor, or rather that men gave themselves away by their sins and were bought again through His mercy. For the Prophet says : ‘ Behold, you are sold for your iniquities, and for your wicked deeds have I put your mother away ’ (*Is.* l. i.), and again : ‘ You have sold yourselves for nought, and you shall be redeemed without money ’ (*Is.* lii. 3). Without money—that is, by the blood of Christ. The Prophet also says : ‘ He was wounded for our iniquities and by his wounds we are healed.’

“ According to you, He redeemed us [from the devil] at the cost of His blood. How then did He rise again from the dead ? For he who received Christ’s blood, if he restored it did not really sell [those souls of which this blood was the price] ; on the other hand if he did not restore it, how did Christ rise again ? We could then not apply to Christ His own words : ‘ I have power to lay down [my life] and take it up again ’ [*JOHN* x. 18], and the devil now holds Christ’s blood as man’s price. Surely this is



all nonsense and blasphemy. He died and He rose again by His own power, He took up again what He had laid down. Where then is the sale when the Prophet says: 'Let God arise and his enemies shall be scattered' (*Ps. lxvii. 1*)?"<sup>1</sup> The dialogue continues in a similar strain, its object being to prove that the master from whom Christ freed us, and redeemed us, was nothing else but sin.

"Acute, true and victorious criticism,"<sup>2</sup> exclaims Harnack; but his words seem rather too fulsome as a description of this string of little *ad hominem* arguments which are ingenious rather than forcible, and which bear only indirectly on the question with which we are concerned. At any rate the page we have quoted shows that already, even then, the theory of a redemption from the devil was considered as semi-gnostic on account of the latent dualism it implied, and that the Christians, even then, considered it inconsistent. Adamantius's critique was not however directed against the more moderate doctrine of Origen. This doctrine contrived somehow to escape the horns of the dilemma, and we shall find it thriving among the disciples of the Alexandrine Doctor.

### III

St. Basil, like the Father last spoken of, acknowledges that sinners are under the rule of Satan, and he describes the latter as closely scrutinising souls at the moment of their death. "God's brave athletes, who have striven all their lives with invisible foes, even after having come scathless out of their ordeal,

<sup>1</sup> ADAMANT. *De recta in Deum fide*, sect. i.—Inter. opp. ORIGEN. *P.G.* xi.; col. 1756-1757.

<sup>2</sup> *Dogmeng.* i. p. 565, note.

are, at the end of their lives, examined by the Prince of this world. If he finds in them any wound, or speck or trace of sin, he keeps them. But if they are whole and spotless they are taken over by Christ to be free and victorious in everlasting peace. The Son of God alone was able to say at the time of His Passion: 'The Prince of this world cometh and in me hath not anything' (JOHN xiv. 30). As for common men the most they can say is, 'he will not find much in me.' Even this little would be dangerous had we not someone who pays our ransom and thus saves us."<sup>1</sup>

St. Basil elsewhere unfolds more clearly his theory of this ransom: "You stand in need of redemption. You have lost your freedom, being vanquished by the devil who holds you captive and will not let you loose save for a fitting ransom. Hence the ransom must be of a different kind and of much greater worth to compel the tyrant to yield up his captives. For this reason no one of your brothers could redeem you, for no man is able to make the devil deliver up what has once fallen into his hands."<sup>2</sup> He therefore infers that Christ alone could save us. St. Basil does not indeed say that Christ delivered his soul to the devil as a ransom for ours; in fact he immediately goes on to speak of the sacrifice which Christ offered to God to expiate our sins, and throughout this section the two ideas of ransom and sacrifice are confused if not confounded. But we must complete the reasoning begun. As the object was to induce the devil to surrender his captives in return for a fitting

<sup>1</sup> BASIL, *Hom. in Psalm. vii. 2.* P.G. xxix. 232-233.

<sup>2</sup> *Hom. in Psalm. xlviii. 3; ibid. col. 437.* ὑποχειρίους ὑμᾶς λαβὼν, οὐ πρότερον . . . ἀφίησι πρὶν ἂν τινι λύτρω ἀξιολόγῃ πεισθεὶς ἀνταλλάξασθαι ὑμᾶς ἐληται.

ransom, if Christ redeemed us it must have been because He offered such a ransom. Starting from such premises the conclusion, though not actually expressed, was inevitable.

St. Basil's thought is possibly a little doubtful, but when we turn to St. Gregory of Nyssa we find no more room for doubt. The latter was a disciple of Origen, and faithfully follows in his footsteps; in addition he brings to the discussion that exactness and logical rigour which seldom fail him. Certainly the theory of the devil's rights never had a better advocate.<sup>1</sup>

He tells us that all God's attributes were exercised in the work of redemption: "Being good He was struck with pity for fallen man; being wise He knew the best way to save him. But justice is a part of wisdom." Now what did justice require? Surely that no violence should be done to him who held us in his power. To have snatched us from him by a fiat of the almighty will, would have been to leave him with a grievance (*δικαιολογίας ἀφορμήν τινα*) for it was by pleasure that he had reduced man to bondage. According to his usual custom, Gregory explains his meaning by means of a comparison. Those who sell their freedom for money become the slaves of the buyer, having sold themselves; it matters not whether they be born free; it was through their own fault that they became bondmen, and hence no one can demand their freedom. Should anyone free them by violence from their buyer, such a one would be guilty of injustice, because he would be robbing the owner of goods which he had acquired justly. On the other hand, no law prevents such captives from being redeemed.

<sup>1</sup> GREG. NYSS. *Orat. catech. magna*, 22-24.—P.G. xlv. 60-66.



This is what happened in our case. We had sold ourselves of our own free-will. He, who in His mercy willed to free us, had to take the way of justice and not that of tyranny. In other words, He had to give to our master the ransom he required.<sup>1</sup> Now what did the devil desire above all? Being anxious to rule, he would evidently not free his prey except for something better; but what could be greater than that Man miraculously born of a virgin who was spreading broadcast cures and wonders? Hence the devil, seeing that he would gain by the exchange, requested Him as the ransom.<sup>2</sup>

But the devil could have had no claim on God, had He not taken on Him human flesh. This was why the Word concealed His Godhead behind the veil of the flesh; for this reason too the devil did not fear Him, but rather longed for Him as for a delectable and harmless prey. In this wise was goodness combined with justice, whilst wisdom ruled them both. This wonderful scheme, by which God assumed a bodily garment that He might Himself be seized, and that the mystery of our salvation might not be prevented through fear of the Divine majesty, shows forth admirably His goodness, wisdom, and justice. His will to save us proves His goodness; His will to save us by purchase—Gregory uses the technical term for contract: συναλλαγματικὴν λύτρωσιν—shows forth His justice; His putting what by nature was intangible within the reach of the enemy proves His wisdom. “God therefore concealed Himself beneath

<sup>1</sup> ἔδει . . . μὴ τὸν τυραννικὸν, ἀλλὰ τὸν δίκαιον τρόπον ἐπινοηθῆναι τῆς ἀνακλήσεως· οὗτος δὲ ἐστὶ τις τῷ ἐπικρατοῦντι ποιήσασθαι πᾶν ὅπερ ἂν ἐθέλοι λύτρον. GREG. NYSS. *Orat. catech. magna*, 23; col. 61.

<sup>2</sup> πλείον τοῦ κατεχομένου τὸ προκείμενον εἶδεν ἐν τῷ συναλλάγματι. τούτου χάριν αὐτὸν αἰρεῖται λύτρον τῶν ἐν τῇ τοῦ θανάτου φρουρᾷ καθεργμένων γενέσθαι. *Ibid.*

the veil of our nature; the devil, like a voracious fish, gobbling up the bait swallowed the hook of the Godhead . . . and was caught. . . . The Evil One had hoped to hold Him in death as he had done with other men. But Christ acted according to His nature; being light He dispelled the darkness, being Life He destroyed death."

An objection crops up: Does not this scheme amount to a fraud on God's part? Gregory foresaw this objection and set it forth in all its force: "It will be objected that we ascribe a lie to God. For He approached the devil not under the form of His Godhead but under that of humanity that He might not be known by him; in other words He made use of false pretences; is it not characteristic of the deceiver to mislead the victim on whom he wishes to fall and thus come on him unexpectedly?"<sup>1</sup> But no, in the case of man's salvation such proceedings only prove God's justice and wisdom.

Justice consists in rendering to each according to his due; hence it is just that the deceiver should be deceived.<sup>2</sup> For to each one it is right to apply the principles he has laid down, just as we can only reap what we have sown. Thus the devil only gathered the consequences of the principles he had sown. He had misled man by the bait of pleasure; he in turn is misled by the human appearance of the Saviour. There is, however, one difference, which is to God's advantage. The devil had made use of fraud in order to pervert man; God makes use of it in order to save them, and thereby to do good even to him by whom we had been lost. In Gregory's

<sup>1</sup> GREG. NYSS. *Orat. catech. magna*, 26; col. 68-69.

<sup>2</sup> ἡ . . . τοῦ κατ' ἀξίαν ἀντίδοσις, δι' ἧς ὁ ἀπατεῶν ἀνταπατάται, τὸ δίκαιον δείκνυσιν. *Ibid.* col. 68.

system the devil too gains by the Atonement, by means of which he in due season will be converted.

In the foregoing we find the frank statement of the theory of the devil's rights. We find the legal principle laid down by St. Irenæus—viz. that the devil must be dealt with justly if grounds for complaint are not to be left to him—and we also find this principle pushed much further than by Origen, for here we are told that there was a true contract between God and the devil which resulted in the latter's discomfiture. But, by thus evolving the theory and laying bare its results, Gregory has admirably succeeded in showing the paradox involved in his position. Very often the best way to put people on their guard against a mistaken view is to expose it in all its completeness.

The theory as elaborated by St. Gregory of Nyssa was formally contested by his namesake of Nazianzus. By this we do not mean to say that St. Gregory Nazianzen actually named Gregory of Nyssa, whose Greater Catechesis he probably had never seen, but that he strongly combated the current view which it would seem was then sufficiently widespread to deserve the attention and censure of the saintly bishop.

“Let us give our attention,” he says, “to a point of doctrine which some neglect but which in my mind deserves serious consideration. To whom, and wherefore, was that blood given, which was shed for, us, that noble and precious blood of a God who became our priest and our victim? We had been captives of the devil because we had sold ourselves to sin and thrown away our happiness. Hence, since a ransom is given only to him who keeps the captives, to whom, I ask, was Christ's blood offered and why was it offered? If it was to the devil, how shocking



would be the thought. How can we believe that he not only received a ransom from God, but actually received God Himself as the ransom, as a salary for his tyranny which had already passed all measure, and which in justice he should already have abdicated?"<sup>1</sup> St. Gregory goes on to show that, strictly speaking, Christ's blood was not even a ransom given to God, but that God accepts it in His benevolence, as part of the economy of Salvation, that we might thereby be freed and delivered after having overcome the tyrant by violence (τοῦ τυράννου βία κρατήσας).

At a considerably later date St. John Damascene was likewise to protest against the grotesque theory of the devil's right: "Our Lord Jesus Christ being without sin was not subject to death, for it was by sin that death came into the world. Hence, if He died it was that He might offer Himself as a sacrifice to God on our behalf. For it was against God that we had sinned and it was to Him consequently that the price of our redemption had to be paid that the decree which was against us might be blotted out. Far be it from us to fancy that the Lord's blood was given to the tyrant."<sup>2</sup>

From this we may see that the notion of a ransom having been paid to the devil was not only distinctly formulated but also strongly opposed. This is acknowledged even by the Protestants, and St. Gregory Nazianzen on this account comes in for a good deal of praise. According to Lichtenberger he deserves a "separate place apart from the other

<sup>1</sup> GREG. NAZ. *Orat.* xlv. 22.—*P.G.* xxxvi.; col. 653. Εἰ μὲν τῷ πονηρῷ, φεῦ τῆς ὕβρεως, εἰ μὴ παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν Θεὸν αὐτὸν λύτρον ὁ ληστῆς λαμβάνει καὶ μισθὸν οὕτως ὑπερφυῆ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ τυραννίδος, δι' ὃν καὶ ἡμῶν φείδεσθαι δίκαιον ἦν.

<sup>2</sup> IOAN. DAMASC. *De orthodoxa fide*, iii. 27. *P.G.* xciv.; col. 1096. Μὴ γὰρ γένοιτο τῷ τυράννῳ τὸ τοῦ Δεσπότητος προσενεχθῆναι αἷμα.

Doctors of that period ”<sup>1</sup>; according to M. Sabatier his should be reckoned among “ the minds of a more delicate stamp and of a more exacting morality ”<sup>2</sup>; from which we infer that the crude notion of the devil’s rights, though it found some supporters here and there in the early centuries, was at no time universal in the Church.

#### IV

Among the Latin Fathers we find some traces of Origen’s influence especially in St. Ambrose, who even outdoes his master and model in the matter of fanciful ingeniousness. His principle is as follows:—*“Venditio propter peccata nostra: propter bonitatem autem Dei redemptio peccatorum.”*<sup>3</sup> The metaphors of sale and redemption involved in this principle are evolved literally. It is with the money of sin that the devil buys us: *“Neminem iugo servitutis astrictum possidet, nisi se prius peccatorum ære ei vendiderit.”*<sup>4</sup> Christ buys us back by giving His blood in payment for our debt:

*“Peccatorum nostrorum nobis æra dimisit et sanguinem suum pro nostris debitis solvit; ut non in fenore essemus alieno, sed in suo ære bonus creditor nos haberet.”*<sup>5</sup>

St. Ambrose, elsewhere, draws out this same metaphor in great detail, and with abundant use of technical terminology<sup>6</sup>:

*“Fuimus ante sub feneratore duro, qui nisi morte debitoris expleri ac satiari nequiret. Venit Dominus Iesus, vidit gravi nos*

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> AMBROS. *In Lucam*, x. 66. *P.L.* xv. ; 1820.

<sup>4</sup> *De Jacob et vita beata*, lib. i. iii. 10. *P.L.* xiv. 602-603.

<sup>5</sup> *Ps.* xxxvi. 46. *Ibid.* 989.

<sup>6</sup> *Epist.* xli. 7-8. *P.L.* xvi. 1115.

obligatos fenore. Nemo fenus suum patrimonio innocentiae suae poterat exsolvere; de meo, unde me liberarem, habere non poteram. Novum absolutionis genus mihi detulit, ut creditorem mutarem, quia fenus unde solverem non habebam. Debitores autem nos non natura, sed culpa fecerat; peccatis enim nostris aera gravia contraximus, ut essemus obnoxii, qui eramus liberi. Debitor enim est qui aliquid accepit de feneratoris pecunia. Peccatum vero a diabolo est; tanquam in eius patrimonio has habet impius opes. Sicut enim Christi divitiae virtutes sunt, ita diaboli opes crimina sunt. Redegerat humanum genus in perpetuam captivitatem obnoxiae hæreditatis gravi fenore, quod obærat auctor ad posteros de fenerata successione transmiserat. Venit Dominus Iesus, mortem suam pro morte omnium optulit, sanguinem suum pro sanguine fudit universorum. Mutavimus ergo creditorem, non evasimus; immo evasimus: manet enim debitum, fenus intercidit."

The above might, indeed, only prove that St. Ambrose was inclined to pursue his metaphors to their term. But, what is more serious, he goes on to tell us that between God and the devil there was a real process of barter:

"Sunt quædam nostrorum nundinæ delictorum. Aut venundamur sub peccato, aut redimimur a peccato. Christus nos redimit, adversarius vendit; ille auctionatur ad mortem, hic redimit ad salutem."

This sale was presided over by the usual laws of demand and supply, and, as was to be expected, the Saviour's exchange was the more generous of the two:

"Adversarius tanquam captiva mancipia vilioris pretio æstimationis addicit: at vero Dominus tanquam speciosa servitia, idoneus sui operis æstimator, magno pretio nos redemit [1 Cor. vi. 20]. Et bene magno, quod non æstimatur aere, sed sanguine [1 Peter i. 18-19]. Et bene pretioso, quia immaculati corporis sanguis est, quia sanguis est Filii Dei."<sup>1</sup>

Nor does St. Ambrose let us forget that this re-

<sup>1</sup> *In Luc.* vii. 114-117. *P.L.* xv.; 1727-1728.



deeming blood, in order that all justice might be fulfilled, had to be paid to the devil himself:

“Si redempti sumus non corruptibilibus argento et auro, sed pretioso sanguine Domini nostri Iesu Christi, quo utique vendente nisi eo qui nostrum iam peccatricis successionis ære quæsitum servitium possidebat? Sine dubio ipse flagitabat pretium, ut servitio exueret quos tenebat obstrictos. Pretium autem nostræ liberationis erat sanguis Domini Iesu, quod *necessario solvendum erat ei, cui peccatis venditi eramus*. Donec igitur hoc pretium pro omnibus solveretur hominibus, quod dominici sanguinis effusione pro omnium fuit solvendum absolute, opus fuit singulorum sanguine.”

This individual payment was made by means of the rite of circumcision. But now that Christ has suffered, the ransom of all has been paid.<sup>1</sup>

Hence we find in St. Ambrose the ideas, and sometimes even the very formulæ, of Origen. What is more surprising, is that we find similar views adopted even by so steady a mind as St. Jerome's.

According to St. Jerome we had sold ourselves to Satan by our sins: “*Scelera nostra atque peccata nos dæmonibus vendiderunt*.”<sup>2</sup> Only Christ's blood could redeem us from this bondage:

“Redimentur autem qui voluerint credere nequaquam argento et pecunia, sed pretioso Christi sanguine.”<sup>3</sup>

St. Jerome frequently uses this traditional metaphor of redemption, which, starting from such premises as those just laid down, could only issue wrongly. As a matter of fact we stand in no need of drawing our own inferences, for St. Jerome saves us the trouble:

“Ille redimitur qui captivus est et in hostium veniens potestatem liber esse desinit. Ita et nos quidam dicunt in hoc mundo

<sup>1</sup> *Epist.* lxxii. 8-9.—*P.L.* xvi. ; col. 1245-1246.

<sup>2</sup> *HIERONYM.* *In Isaiam*, lib. xiii.—*P.L.* xxiv. ; col. 475.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* lib. xiv. ; col. 496. *Cp. In Matth.* lib. iii.—*P.L.* xxvi. col. 144 and *In Ep. ad Tit.* ii. 12 ; *ibid.* col. 587.

esse captivos et sub principibus et potestatibus iugo servitutis teneri, nec ante vinctas catenis explicare manus, nisi redemptor advenerit. Sed quis iste, aiunt, tantus et talis qui possit pretio suo totum orbem redimere? Iesus Christus Filius Dei proprium sanguinem dedit et nos de servitute eripiens libertate donavit. Consequenter autem post redemptionem sanguinis Christi, remissionem accepisse scribimur peccatorum; quia, nisi redempti fuerimus, frustra nobis peccata donantur. Nec ante veniam accipere possumus delictorum et servi esse cessamus, *nisi pretium pro nobis cruentus quondam victor accepit.*"<sup>1</sup>

The above text distinguishes, as clearly as it is possible to do, the two consequences of sin; our guilt and our bondage under Satan; so much so that it would have been useless to free us from sin had we not also, by means of a ransom, been redeemed from the devil. No doubt it is true that St. Jerome is here speaking of an opinion, but, besides that he seems to make it his own, it is difficult, since he neither blames or explains it, to absolve him of complicity in the matter. Origen's influence, which moved Ambrose so strongly, acted less powerfully on St. Jerome; the great exegetist must, nevertheless, be reckoned among the advocates of the devil's rights.

## V

What must we think of such a doctrine? So far, we have merely quoted texts without expressing any view on them; we must now formulate some judgment concerning the value of the teaching they embody.

Protestants seem unable to find words strong enough to express their abhorrence of this doctrine. Ritschl points to the flagrant contradiction with Divine justice which is set up as a principle by this

<sup>1</sup> Eph. i. 7. P.L. xxvi.; 450-451.

theory. As the devil was unable to keep the equivalent offered him in exchange for men, we must needs admit that he was misled as to the consequences of the contract. But we must also admit that the other bargainer, God, who knows all, had the intention to deceive him, which in other words is to find God's justice in fault.<sup>1</sup> Harnack puts all his contempt into one little sentence: "This shows that a sane view of God's holiness and justice has receded further and further from the Fathers."<sup>2</sup> Harnack is, however, inclined to admit that "this grotesque notion of the part played by the devil in Christ's death, involved one good thing. It reminded men that every rogue is a stupid devil, and that Satan is, and always remains, a rogue and a fool."<sup>3</sup>

M. Sabatier does not descend to such irony. "This conception," he writes, "tickled popular fancy; but Theology in appropriating it, was departing from the theory of a sacrifice offered to God. Is it not an odd thing to see, that, at this period, in the early Christian Church, whilst thought tended in one direction, worship was tending in the other? To have been consistent, the Church should have made of the Mass a sacrifice offered to the devil."<sup>4</sup>

From what we have said, the reader already knows how little truth there is in the statement that at any time the idea of a sacrifice offered to God disappeared from the Church; he will therefore know what to think of the allegations made by M. Sabatier. But there is one point on which all historians of dogma agree—viz. in seeing in the theory of the devil's rights the imprint of mythology.

Among the few Catholic theologians who have

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* i. pp. 16-18.

<sup>2</sup> *Dogmengeschichte*, ii. p. 173.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 180, note 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 48.



condescended to deal with this matter, Döerholt speaks in the same strain. Not only does he say that this theory was "more likely to abase, than to elevate the Redeemer and His work," he even says that, taken strictly, "it would be more a pagan than a Christian conception."<sup>1</sup> But his opinion is that the Fathers never professed it, and that their texts will bear a different interpretation. He proves this by explaining Origen and St. Gregory of Nyssa in the light of the rectifications introduced later on by St. Augustine, St. Leo, St. Gregory the Great, and St. Thomas; in this wise he is able to infer<sup>2</sup>: "When the Fathers speak of a ransom paid to the devil we must understand their words metaphorically, rather than literally. Correctly speaking we must say that Christ suffered, that Satan, by his human tools, shed Christ's blood, and deprived Him of His bodily life; but the price of our redemption paid by His loving obedience was given not to the devil, but to His Father in heaven."<sup>3</sup>

But unfortunately history, like law, is not retrospective, and Thomassinus made proof of a better historical sense when he acknowledged that several Fathers—he mentions Ambrose and Gregory of Nyssa—actually put forward the theory of a ransom paid to the devil, a theory alike shocking to his common-sense and piety: *Exhorrescit animus pietasque*.<sup>4</sup> Of course, as we shall have occasion to show,

<sup>1</sup> DÖERHOLT, *op. cit.* pp. 128-129.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 132-133.

<sup>3</sup> A similar explanation is given by PESCH, *Prælect. theol.* iv. p. 199 (Freiburg, 1896).

<sup>4</sup> THOMASSIN. *De Inc. Verbi*, lib. i. iii. 15-17. What is surprising is that Thomassinus, a little farther on, ascribes the doctrine to all the Fathers, that he may the better exonerate them all (*ibid.* lib. ix. viii. 1). In his first reply, in which we find more discrimination, we also find more truth.

theological explanations were not long in coming ; but at the same time we have no right to anticipate them. On the contrary there can be no doubt that a certain number of Fathers, following Origen's lead, taught that Christ's blood had been paid to Satan as a ransom for our souls.

The origin of this doctrine is easily found. It was admitted as an axiom that we had become slaves of the devil and that our redemption could only be accomplished according to justice. But does not justice demand that the owner should be paid for ceding his rights, or that, if his goods be appropriated by another, he should receive compensation ? If the principle be allowed, this answer is the simplest, and, as such, the first to suggest itself. But in granting, or seeming to grant, to the devil, rights which God Himself is obliged to respect, are we not forgetting the supreme rights of the Creator, and laying ourselves open to the charge of gnostic dualism ? The Fathers, happily, never sounded the implicit postulates and logical consequences of the system. Want of reflection and their being carried away by the ardour of their rhetoric may be alleged as extenuating circumstances ; but of the doctrine of the devil's rights we must not hesitate to say boldly that, taken literally, it was a crude and unworthy invention.

Hence, whatever may have been the names and the number of the Fathers who upheld it, the Church cannot be burdened with the responsibility of their error, for, as we have seen, no sooner did the theory come into being, than it was attacked, and, as we have yet to see, was soon superseded by another.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE POLITICAL FORM: THEORY OF THE ABUSE OF POWER. ST. AUGUSTINE, ST. LEO THE GREAT

ALL Protestant historians of dogma deal at length with the ransom-theory which we have just discussed. All of them also allow it to transpire, even when they do not expressly state it, that this was the only manner in vogue among the Fathers of viewing the devil's rights. For instance in Harnack's work we find St. Gregory the Great, St. Leo, and St. Augustine placed cheek by jowl with Origen and St. Gregory of Nyssa.<sup>1</sup> Ritschl even gives a similar unenviable position to St. Gregory Nazianzen,<sup>2</sup> to say nothing of M. Sabatier, who considers the theory in question to have been the only form adopted by the early theology of the Atonement. The only difference serving to distinguish these various historians is to be found in the various degrees of severity with which they pronounce judgment on the early Fathers. Yet nothing can be more false, for though it be true that the theory of the devil's rights continued to exercise men's minds, that of a ransom paid to the devil soon fell beyond hope, making way for another theory which, though based on the same legal principle, applies it in an entirely different manner. In default of a better word we shall call it the political theory. The theory amounts to this: between God and the devil there

<sup>1</sup> *Dogmengeschichte*, ii. p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 16. It is difficult to believe that this was owing to a slip, for we find here in juxtaposition the names of Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory the Great.



exists a kind of compact limiting their respective sovereignties. The devil received from God the power to put all men to death for their sins ; but in slaying Christ who was guiltless he trespassed beyond his bounds. God was therefore justified in depriving him of his captives for having abused his rights. Hence there is no longer any talk of a ransom given to the devil, who is merely punished for his crime. This is the theory which we shall find superseding the earlier one.

## I

Among the Greek Fathers, the first to adopt this theory was St. John Chrysostom. He comments as follows on St. John's text : *Iudicium est mundi huius* :—

“There is judgment and revenge ; but how ? The devil put to death the first man because he found him guilty of sin. But in me [the speaker is Christ] he found no sin. Why then did he run against me to slay me ? Why did he put it into Judas's heart to betray me ? Say not that such was the decree of Providence, for that was a matter which concerned only the Divine wisdom and not the devil. Hence our business is to seek the intentions of the wicked one. But how is the world judged in me ? A court, as it were, of justice, will be called together and they will say to him : Thou didst put all men to death because they were guilty, but why didst thou kill Christ, was this not an act of flagrant injustice ? [*οὐκ εὐδηλον ὅτι ἀδίκως* ;]. In this wise the whole world will be avenged in Christ. To make matters clearer, I will use a comparison. Let us imagine a despot, who variously torments all those who fall into his hands ;

if he should seize and put to death unjustly the king or the king's son, this death would bring about vengeance for all the others. Let us imagine a creditor who seizes his debtor, and scourges him, and claps him in prison; should he dare to act likewise to one who owes him nothing, he will be punished for what he has done even to the others, for he will be put to death. So is it with the Son of God; for the devil will be punished for what he did to us, because he dared to lift his hand against Christ."<sup>1</sup>

St. Chrysostom expresses himself more clearly in another passage. "The Son of God," he says, "vanquished and condemned sin [*i.e.* the devil] by the death of His flesh. How many and great were its benefits! First that sin should not prevail over the flesh; secondly that it should be vanquished, and vanquished by the flesh; thirdly that it should be not only vanquished but punished. So long as he apprehended sinners only, their death was just, but he was unjust in delivering to death that sinless body (*ὡς ἀδικήσασα κατεκρίθη*). What a victory this is! The flesh was not vanquished by sin; on the contrary, it was sin that was vanquished and condemned as guilty. Christ first convinced him of crime, and then condemned him as guilty. Hence there was here no wrong done, but simply justice."<sup>2</sup>

We find the same views in St. Cyril of Alexandria. This Father, in one passage, mentions a curious opinion. Satan the elder, the demons' leader, is sup-

<sup>1</sup> IOAN. CHRYSOST. *In Ioan. hom. lxxviii. 2-3.*—*P.G. lix. col. 372-373.* ὦν γὰρ εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐποίησεν ὁ διάβολος, δι' ὧν εἰς τὸν Χριστὸν ἐτόλμησεν, ἀπαιτηθήσεται δίκην.

<sup>2</sup> *In Rom. hom. xiii. 5.*—*P.G. lx. ; col. 514.* τὸ μὴ ἀπλῶς καταδικάσαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς ἁμαρτοῦσαν καταδικάσαι . . . , οὐχ ἀπλῶς ἰσχύϊ καὶ ἐξουσίᾳ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ τοῦ δικαίου λόγῳ.

posed to have been bound by God's power and cast into hell, there to suffer. His place was taken by another, in all things wicked like unto his father; him it is that Christ styles the "prince of the world." St. Cyril would be inclined to make this opinion his own, were it not that Satan's sovereignty was destroyed only by the coming of our Lord.<sup>1</sup> How it was destroyed, he explains as follows:—

"God took pity on our nature which had been vanquished by the devil, wounded and made subject to Death. He protected His likeness and scattered our enemies, not by the power of His godhead, nor with a legion of His angels, but by putting Himself, through the Incarnation, in the troop of the vanquished, and allowing His body to be done to death, in order to convict sin of injustice and destroy the power of death. For death, being a penalty of sin, He who is sinless, did not deserve to die. But sin—*i.e.* the devil—being vanquished, condemned its conqueror to death. It passed against Him the sentence it had passed against all its subjects; in this there was injustice. So long as sin condemned only its own subjects to death, it was acting rightly, and God was tolerant. But when it attacked the Guiltless and Holy One, it committed an act of injustice, and was bound to lose its power."<sup>2</sup>

Though both Cyril and Chrysostom presuppose the legal axiom formulated above, neither of them express it in set words. But, at about the same period, we find it thus stated by the pseudo-Areopagite: "God's bounty made us partakers of His

<sup>1</sup> CYRIL. ALEXANDR. *In Ioan.* vi.—*P.G.* lxxiii.; col. 894.

<sup>2</sup> *De Inc. Domini*, xi.—*P.G.* lxxv.; col. 1433-1436. ἡττηθεῖσα ἡ ἁμαρτία ἀκαὶ τὸν νικητὴν κατακρίνασα θανάτῳ . . . ἀδικοῦσα ἐάλω . . . , ἀναγκαίως . . . ὡς ἄδικος τῆς ἐξουσίας ἐκβάλλεται.



goods, after having destroyed the demons' sovereignty over us. He destroyed it not by power, breaking it down by force, but, according to the mystic saying which we have received, by judgment and by justice."<sup>1</sup> The author does not however tell us how this piece of justice was accomplished.

In Theodoret we find both the principle and its application. "God, when He decided to save man, willed to do so both wisely and justly. He did not will to free us by merely using His power, nor did He will to use His mercy only against man's enemy, *lest the latter should accuse this mercy of being unjust*. He sought a means which should be at once full of love and of justice. To this end He united Himself to vanquished human nature, and led it back to the conflict, and trained it to redeem its defeat, and vanquish him by whom it had once been so utterly undone."<sup>2</sup>

Again in a discourse which we shall meet again, Christ is described as addressing the devil as follows:—"Inasmuch as thou hast unjustly apprehended one, thou shalt be despoiled of all the others. . . . I shall deliver them all from death, and shall do this, not by mercy alone, but by mercy and justice, not by despotic power, but by just power."<sup>3</sup> In the latter sentence there is the idea of abuse of power, but the former shows us that Theodoret retained the idea, already expressed by St. Irenæus, that God, in order that Satan's defeat might be entirely just, willed mankind's deliverance to be effected by one of its members.

<sup>1</sup> DIONYS. AREOP. *De Eccl. hierarchia*, iii. 11.—*P.G.* iii. ; col. 441.

<sup>2</sup> THEODORET, *De Providentia, Sermo* x.—*P.G.* lxxxiii. ; col. 748.  
 ἵνα μὴ ἄδικον ἐκείνος προσαγορεύῃ τὸν ἔλεον, . . . μηχανᾶται πόρον καὶ  
 φιλανθρωπίας γέμοντα καὶ δικαιοσύνην κεκοσμημένον.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* col. 760.

We find this last idea, all alone, in St. John Damascene. He, too, sees a proof of God's justice in that "man having been vanquished, it was not by means of another that God chose to overcome the despot, nor by forceful means that He snatched man from death; but he whom death had reduced to bondage through sin, was made by God to be again the conqueror."<sup>1</sup> When God became man "it was to make him to vanquish, who had been vanquished (*ἵνα τὸ νικηθὲν νικήσῃ*). For He was able by His omnipotence, which stops at nothing, to snatch man from the tyrant; only the devil might have complained, had he been violently deprived of the spoils of his victory, after having fairly vanquished man. This was why God, in His mercy, became man and redeemed us by becoming like unto us."<sup>2</sup>

The above will serve to show that the theory of the devil being punished for having abused his power was known to the Greek Fathers. It was, however, among the Latins that it was to find most of its adherents, and its more perfect form, and become an almost classical doctrine.

## II

The first outlines of the theory appear in the earliest Latin writers of the fourth century.

St. Hilary follows St. Irenæus in saying that it was fitting that the devil should be overcome by

<sup>1</sup> IOAN. DAMASC. *De orth. fide*, iii. 1.—*P.G.* xciv.; col. 984, quoted by ST. THOMAS, *Sum. th.* iii\*, q. 1, art. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* iii, 18; col. 1072. οὐκ ἀδύνατος γὰρ ἦν ὁ τὰ πάντα δυνάμενος καὶ τῇ παντοδυνάμῳ αὐτοῦ ἐξουσίᾳ καὶ δυνάμει ἐξελεῖσθαι τοῦ τυραννοῦντος τὸν ἄνθρωπον· ἀλλ' ἦν ἐγκλήματος τῷ τυραννοῦντι ὑπόθεσις, ἄνθρωπον νικήσαντι, καὶ ὑπὸ Θεοῦ βιασθέντι.

a man and not by God: "*Non erat a Deo diabolus, sed a carne vincendus.*"<sup>1</sup> But to prove this he lays stress on the manner in which the devil had abused his rights, and thus deserved his condemnation. This is probably the interpretation which should be given to the following:—"Christ, like a conqueror, chained the devils to His triumphal car."<sup>2</sup> He triumphed over them because they it was who by taking possession of the heart of Judas, were the authors of His death (*Auctores mortis humanæ etiam in seipso, per occupatum a Satana cor Iudæ, auctores sunt mortis*). Hence they will be punished, not only for this one death, but also for that of all men: "*Ut neque a pœna mortis abessent . . . et omnem pœnam humanæ mortis exciperent ut auctores, cum in æternitatis Dominum auctores mortis exstitissent.*"<sup>3</sup>

But the text which effectually dispels all doubt is this: "Christ intended by His Passion to judge the prince of this world, and condemn sin—*i.e.* the devil—in the flesh. Though there was in Him no stain of sin, according to the saying of Scripture, the prince of the world came. He found nothing in Him, and yet he inflicted on Him death, which is the penalty of sin (*peccati tamen pœnam, id est ius mortis, exseruit*). The author of our death, by thus inflicting death on the Author of life who knew no sin, judged himself: *Humanæ mortis auctor, quia in auctorem vitæ, peccati nescium, mortem molitus sit, iudicatur.*"<sup>4</sup>

From this we see that, though St. Hilary considers Satan's murder of our Saviour as an injustice and a

<sup>1</sup> HILAR. *In Matth.* iii. 2.—*P.L.* ix. ; col. 929.

<sup>2</sup> *Cp. De Trin.* i. 13.—*P.L.* x. ; col. 35.

<sup>3</sup> *In Ps.* lxxvii. 23.—*P.L.* ix. ; col. 460.

<sup>4</sup> *In Ps.* lxxviii. 8 ; *ibid.* col. 475. *Cp. Ps.* lxxiii. 5 ; *ibid.* col. 376.



crime which results in the Evil One's discomfiture, he does not otherwise explain how this came about. St. Pacian, Bishop of Barcelona, supplies what we miss in Hilary, and he clearly lays it down that the devil exceeded his rights:

"Hoc fuit vincere sine peccato condemnari. Diabolus enim in peccatores acceperat potestatem, quam sibi ille super immaculatum vindicavit; ac sic superatus est, *id decernens super Iustum quod illi per legem quam acceperat non licebat.*"<sup>1</sup>

But it is Ambrosiaster who furnishes the most details. This author seems haunted by the idea of the devil, to whom he constantly refers. He himself several times tells us that in his vocabulary "sin" stands for the devil, and anyone who knows how often the former word occurs in St. Paul will understand how many occasions such a commentator would find to express his views on the subject.

The devil held sway over men. Previous to the Law he had been supreme (*ante legem erat quasi quietus; securus enim erat de possessione eius*). But after the promulgation of the Law he lost his sovereignty, though, like the rogue he was, he found means of turning to men's disadvantage what had been given them for their profit:

"Quem enim vidit factum sub lege, pro certo habuit de suo sublatum dominio. . . . Cœpit non imperare, sed subtiliter fallere . . . , ut in contrarium fieret homini lex, quæ data erat ut prodesset." <sup>2</sup>

Elsewhere we read:

"Cum data esset lex ad utilitatem humanam, id egit diabolus ut, suadendo illicita, inverteret; ut quod profuturum datum erat in contrarium proficeret." <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PACIAN, *Sermo de Baptismo*, 4.—*P.L.* xiii. ; col. 1092.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. AMBROS. *Rom.* vii. 8.—*P.L.* xvii. ; col. 109.

<sup>3</sup> *Rom.* v. 20 ; col. 99.

By means of his temptations he had established his empire in the very hearts of men :

“Postquam autem hominem circumvenit et subiugavit, potestatem in eum accepit ut interiorem hominem pulsaret, copulans se menti eius.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus all men were committing sin and falling into everlasting death. As was to be expected, the devil rejoiced in this state of things: “*Gaudebat Satanas securus, quod causa Adæ relictum a Deo hominem in possessionem habebat.*”<sup>2</sup> It was then that God decided to put an end to Satan’s proud reign, and, to do so, He sent His Son :

“Tunc iustus atque misericors Deus, ut gloriam diaboli, quam de triumphato homine quæsierat, exinaniret, Filium suum venturum decrevit, qui omnia peccata donaret.”<sup>3</sup>

The devil longed to hold Christ, and the latter allowed the enemy to have his way. But Satan in attacking Him had unawares attacked One mightier than himself, and, in the event, he himself was vanquished, and despoiled of his victims :

“Christus nos redemit, offerens se pro nobis. Permisit enim diabolo sævienti, sed impræscio. Putans autem se Christum posse retinere, veluti accepit eum : sed quia virtutem eius ferre non potuit, omnes quos tenebat simul cum illo amisit.”<sup>4</sup>

A little farther on we again find :

“Cum in ditione diaboli genus hominum teneretur, Salvator optulit se volenti diabolo ; ut illudens eum potestate virtutis suæ (accipere enim voluit, quem detinere non potuit) auferret ei quæ malo iure tenebat obnoxia. Exspoliatis itaque inferis, tropæum animarum pertulit ad Patrem.”<sup>5</sup>

God allowed the devil to be thus deceived that

<sup>1</sup> *Rom.* vii. 14 ; col. 112.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* v. 14 ; col. 94.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* v. 20 ; col. 99.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 24 ; col. 80.

<sup>5</sup> *Gal.* i. 4 ; col. 340.

regret for his rashness might come to aggravate the shame of his defeat :

“Dignum enim fuit ut quod inimicus, impræscius futurorum, contra se quasi pro se facere putabat, permitteretur ei ; ut impræscientiam suam sibi imputans, facti sui pœnitentia torqueretur.”<sup>1</sup>

The devil was not only vanquished, he was condemned :

“In ipso peccavit diabolus, cum illum innocentem occidit, qui peccatum omnino nesciret.<sup>2</sup> . . . In cruce peccatum, quia peccavit, damnatum dicitur. Unde sublata est illi auctoritas quasi peccati, qua detinebat homines in inferno propter delictum Adæ.”<sup>3</sup>

Finally in the following text the theory is explained fully :—

“Dum non peccando Salvator vincit peccatum quod hominem tenebat obnoxium, insuper et occiditur ab eo innocens. Sic crucifixit peccatum. Devictum enim peccatum mortificatum dicitur : crux enim non Salvatoris mors est, sed peccati. *Innocens enim qui occiditur reos illos facit a quibus occiditur.* (Peccatum autem principes et potestates intelligamus, quorum studio peccavit primus Adam.) . . . Mors enim ipsorum hæc est, quia victi a Salvatore, dum exspoliantur animabus quas detinebant in captivitate, mortificantur. Rei enim facti sunt : quia, cum hac auctoritate animas tenerent quia peccaverant, ipsi inventi sunt amplius peccatores, dum illum qui eos non peccando vicerat occiderunt. Et sic iuste exspoliati sunt, sicut dixit, publice, id est in cruce.”<sup>4</sup>

The idea underlying all these passages is that the devil overstepped his rightful bounds by putting One to death who was guiltless, and that for this crime he was despoiled by God. It only remained for someone to set forth the principles concerning the devil's rights and God's justice, such as they are implied in this theory. This work was to be accomplished by St. Augustine.

<sup>1</sup> Eph. v. 2 ; col. 394.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. vii. 4 ; col. 106.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. viii. 4 ; col. 118.

<sup>4</sup> Col. ii. 15 ; col. 431.



## III

St. Augustine in at least two different places deals with the devil ; the first time in *De libero arbitrio*.<sup>1</sup>

St. Augustine begins by proving that the devil had acquired certain perfectly just rights over us in consequence of sin :

“ Nam et illud appensum est æquitatis examine, ut nec ipsius diaboli potestati negaretur homo, quem sibi male suadendo subiecerat. Iniquum enim erat ut ei quem ceperat non dominaretur.”

This does not, however, prevent the devil's being ever subject to God's power :

“ Verbum Dei unicus Dei Filius diabolum, *quem semper sub legibus suis habuit et habebit*, homine indutus etiam homini subiugavit.”

Him, Christ decided to overcome by justice rather than by might :

“ Hujus enim modi homo solus prævalere potuit . . . ut chirographum mortis aboleret et humiliaret calumniatorem, non tamen ei maiestate naturæ suæ, sed habitu nostræ conveniens ; et nihil ei extorquens violento dominatu, *sed superans eum lege iustitiæ*.”

This He did by His guiltlessness, and by His being conceived without sin :

“ Non solum quia sine delicto occisus est, sed etiam quia sine libidine natus, cui subiugaverat ille quos ceperat ; ut quidquid exinde nasceretur tanquam suæ arboris fructus, prava quidem habendi cupiditate, sed tamen non iniquo possidendi iure retineret.”

The devil's right rested on sin, and, however wicked his intentions, this right of his was just enough ; so

<sup>1</sup> AUGUST. *De lib. arbitr.* lib. iii. c. x. 29-31. *P.L.* xxxii. ; col. 1285-1287. This passage is quoted verbally by ST. PAULINUS OF NAOI, *Ep.* xxiii. 15. *P.L.* lxi. ; col. 267.

much so that he could not have been deprived of it had he not overstepped his limits :

“ . . . Femina decepta et deiecto per feminam viro, omnem prolem primi hominis tanquam peccatricem legibus mortis, malitiosa quidem nocendi cupiditate, sed tamen ut *æquissimo iure victoriæ, vindicabat . . . ut . . . tamdiu potestas eius valeret donec interficeret iustum*, in quo nihil dignum morte posset ostendere.”

He did this in unjustly putting Christ to death ; hence he is now justly despoiled :

“ Iustissime itaque cogitur dimittere credentes in eum quem iniustissime occidit.”

This explains how it was possible to snatch man from the devil without doing violence to the latter :

“ Ita factum est ut neque diabolo per vim eriperetur homo, quem nec ipse vi, sed persuasione ceperat.”

The matter is dealt with by St. Augustine a second time in his treatise on the Trinity.<sup>1</sup>

St. Augustine, first of all, tells us that the devil had certain rights over us : “ *Quadam iustitia Dei in potestatem diaboli traditum est genus humanum.*” But, as he explains, this right is merely a concession on the part of God :

“ Modus autem iste, quo traditus est homo in diaboli potestatem, non ita debet intelligi tamquam hoc Deus fecerit aut fieri iusserit ; sed *quod tantum permiserit, iuste tamen.* Illo enim deserente peccantem, peccati auctor illico invasit.”

But on this account neither man nor the devil escapes from the sphere of God's power and bounty :

“ Nec hominem a lege suæ potestatis amisit, quando in diaboli potestate esse permisit : quia nec ipse diabolus a potestate omnipotentis alienus est, sicut neque a bonitate.”

Hence, since our bondage is a result of sin, the

<sup>1</sup> *De Trinitate*, lib. xiii. c. xii. ff 16-19. P.L. xlii. ; col. 1026-1029.

forgiveness of sins is the only means—and the only pre-requisite—of our deliverance :

“Si ergo commissio peccatorum, per iram Dei iustam, hominem subdidit diabolo, profecto remissio peccatorum per reconciliationem Dei benignam eruit hominem a diabolo.”<sup>1</sup>

But it was fitting that the devil should be overcome by justice and not by might: “*Non autem diabolus potentia Dei, sed iustitia superandus fuit.*” As it were, to avoid giving the impression that this means was absolutely necessary, Augustine goes on to say that it was adopted by God’s good pleasure: “*Placuit Deo ut non potentia diabolus, sed iustitia vinceretur.*”

He even undertakes to inform us of the reason of God’s decision, and his account makes curious reading. He tells us that no one was indeed more powerful than the Almighty, and that no created power could be compared with the power of the Creator. But because the devil since his fall had forsaken justice and only made use of force—a departure in which men also were following him—God, fearing to encourage such a tendency, willed to deliver man by justice, rather than by power.

“*Quæ est igitur iustitia, qua victus est diabolus? Quæ nisi iustitia Iesu Christi? Et quo modo victus est? quia cum in eo nihil morte dignum inveniret, occidit eum tamen. Et utique iustum est ut debitores quos tenebat liberi dimittantur, in eum credentes quem sine ullo debito occidit.*”

But does this amount to saying that, short of this, the devil’s defeat would not have been just? St. Augustine states the question in all seriousness:

“Numquid isto iure æquissimo diabolus vinceretur, si potentia Christus cum illo agere, non iustitia voluisset?”

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<sup>1</sup> Cp. *De Civ. Dei.* lib. x. c. xxii. *P.L.* xli.; col. 300. Also *In Ioan.* lii. 6. *P.L.* xxxv.; col. 1771.



Yes, it would have been just; but it pleased God to act otherwise: "*Sed postposuit quod potuit, ut prius ageret quod oportuit.*" Moreover, power, too, played its part in the Resurrection, but only after the fulfilment of justice:

"Et iustitia ergo prius et potentia postea diabolum vicit: iustitia scilicet, quia nullum peccatum habuit et ab illo iniustissime est occisus; potentia vero quia revixit mortuus, numquam postea moriturus. Sed potentia diabolum vicisset, etiamsi ab illo non potuisset occidi."

Hence the devil wickedly abused his rights, and as a punishment lost all his rightful captives:

"Tunc sanguis ille, quoniam eius erat qui nullum habuit omnino peccatum, ad remissionem nostrorum fusus est peccatorum: ut quia eos diabolus merito tenebat, quos peccati reos condicione mortis obstrinxit, hos per eum merito dimitteret, quem nullius peccati reum immerito pœna mortis affecit. Hac iustitia victus et hoc vinculo vinctus est fortis, ut vasa eius eriperentur."

In another passage St. Augustine gives in concise form a summary of this doctrine in its entirety:

"Minuisti eum paulo minus ab angelis . . . ut ab iniquo, velut æquo iure adversum nos agente, ipse occisus innocens eum iure æquissimo superaret . . . nosque liberaret a captivitate propter peccatum justa, suo iusto sanguine iniuste fuso mortis chirographum delens."<sup>1</sup>

< M. Portalié has quite rightly reduced St. Augustine's doctrine to three heads: "1. The devil had no right over us, and what is styled his right was merely a permission granted by God to punish sinners; he was the executioner, not the master. 2. Hence, no ransom was due to him, and God's forgiveness of our sins immediately resulted in our being set free. 3. This forgiveness might have been granted gratui-

<sup>1</sup> *De Trin.* lib. iv. c. xiii. 17. *Ibid.* col. 900. *Cp. Enchiridion*, 49. *P.L.* xl.; col. 256.

tously without any reparation, but it was more seemly that Divine Justice should be fulfilled and that the devil should lose his power through his injustice; such was the plan of the Passion." The scholarly writer quite rightly infers that Augustine never fell, as so many historians state him to have done, into the crude theory which looked on Christ's death as a ransom paid to the devil.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, on at least one occasion, Augustine used both the idea and the word "redemption" in a passage which reads very suspiciously. This passage is the conclusion of the chapter which we have been quoting<sup>2</sup>:

*"In hac redemptione tanquam pretium pro nobis datus est sanguis Christi, quo accepto diabolus non ditatus est, sed ligatus; ut nos ab eius nexibus solveremur, nec quemquam, secum eorum quos Christus, ab omni debito liber, indebite fuso suo sanguine redemisset, peccatorum retibus involutum traheret ad secundæ ac sempiternæ mortis exitum."*

Christ's blood is given as a price to the devil, who accepts it; in this expression we seem to meet an old friend. Did St. Augustine unwittingly come under the influence of Origen's theory? Certainly appearances would seem to suggest it. But if we examine the passage more closely the meaning seems to resolve itself into this. Christ delivered Himself and gave Himself to death, which in Patristic language is equivalent to saying that He gave Himself to the devil, and the latter received His blood by causing it to be shed on the cross, though this murder, far from redounding to his profit, caused his ruin. Thus Christ's blood may be styled "a sort of ransom,"

<sup>1</sup> VACANT, *Dict. th. cath.* art. *Augustin*, col. 2371-2372.

<sup>2</sup> *De Trin.* lib. xiii. 19; col. 1029.

a ransom "which does not enrich but which binds." <sup>1</sup>

This final conclusion is not in contradiction with the doctrine previously expressed by St. Augustine; it is merely a new rendering of it. It is indeed manifest that St. Augustine is inclined to use the common vocabulary associated with the ransom theory. In this he was not only making a concession to the received language, he was also endeavouring to explain it away. He retains indeed the traditional expressions, but only after having first emptied them of their contents and explained them in accordance with his own system. His only reason for thus paying any attention to the old theory was that it was widespread in the Christian community; his intention was, not to adopt, but to adapt it. In this he succeeded, and henceforth what we shall find will be the theory of the abuse of rights, of which we have already found the elements in many regions, but which St. Augustine was the first to set up as a working theory.

#### IV

As we might expect from a popular preacher, St. Leo the Great in his sermons speaks frequently and copiously of the devil and his rights.

He several times states that God in order to vanquish the devil willed to use, not His power, but His justice:

"Iustus et misericors Deus non sic iure suæ voluntatis est usus ut, ad reparationem nostram, solam potentiam benignitatis exsereret sed sic redemptio est impensa captivis *ut condemnationis iusta sententia*

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<sup>1</sup> Augustine is acquainted with the other theory that the devil was vanquished by that very human nature over which he fancied he had prevailed.—*De Trin.* lib. XIII. xvii. 22-xviii. 23; col. 1032-1033.



*iusto liberationis opere solveretur. Nam si pro peccatoribus sola se opponeret Deitas, non tam ratio diabolum vinceret quam potestas."*<sup>1</sup> "Sic consilium suum dirigens in effectum ut, ad dominationem diaboli destruendam, *magis uteretur iustitia rationis quam potestate virtutis."*<sup>2</sup>

Such is the fact as seen by St. Leo. One of its reasons is that human nature had to be restored by its own self:

"Omnipotentia Filii Dei potuisset humanum genus a dominatu diaboli solo imperio suæ voluntatis eruere, nisi divinis operibus maxime congruisset ut nequitiae hostilis adversitas de eo quod vicerat vinceretur, et per ipsam naturam naturalis repararetur libertas, per quam generalis fuerat illata captivitas."<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, since the devil had captured us without using force, he ought in fairness to be dealt with likewise:

"Quia non ita in primum hominem diabolus violentus exstiterat ut eum in partes suas sine liberi arbitrii consensione transferret, *sic destruendum peccatum fuerat . . . ut dono gratiæ non obsesset norma iustitiæ."*<sup>4</sup>

This is why Christ was made flesh and became in all things like unto us, save in sin. This likeness deceived the devil, and he exceeded his rights in condemning Christ as a sinner. This excess resulted in his own destruction:

"Unus in quo diabolus quod suum diceret non haberet. *Qui dum in eum sævit quem sub peccati lege non tenuit, ius impiæ dominationis amisit."*<sup>5</sup>

St. Leo had already several times given, in neat

<sup>1</sup> LEO MAGN. *Serm.* lvi. 1. *P.L.* liv. ; col. 326.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* lxiv. 2 ; *ibid.* col. 358.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* lxiii. 1 ; col. 353.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* xxviii. 3 ; col. 223. From which is apparent the absent-mindedness of some theologians who quote this text to prove that God's justice requires an adequate satisfaction. *Cp.* STENTRUP, *Soteriol.* (Innsbrück, 1883), i. p. 73.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* lxiv. 2 ; col. 359.

form, the summary of the system of which we have just seen the several parts. This is the principle from which he starts:

“Verax misericordia Dei, cum ad reparandum humanum genus ineffabiliter ei multa suppeterent, hanc potissimum consulendi viam elegit, qua, ad destruendum opus diaboli, non virtute uteretur potentiae, sed ratione iustitiae.”

For the devil had certain rights which it beseemed God to respect:

“Nam superbia hostis antiqui *non immerito sibi in omnes homines ius tyrannicum vindicabat*, nec indebito dominatu premebat quos a mandato Dei spontaneos in obsequium suae voluntatis illexerat. *Non utique iuste amitteret originalem humani generis servitutem nisi de eo quod subegerat vinceretur.*”

Then it was that Christ became flesh. The devil never learnt of His miraculous birth (*illusa est securi hostis astutia*). Satan saw Christ behaving like any other infant and submitting to all the ordinances of the Law. He tempted Him,<sup>1</sup> he overwhelmed Him with ignominy and, to finish up, vented all his wrath on Him during the Passion. Satan was misled by Christ's submissiveness:

“Sciens quo humanam naturam infecisset veneno, nequaquam credidit primae transgressionis exsortem quem tot documentis didicist esse mortalem.”

Hence he stretched his rights to their very limits, and beyond:

“Perstitit ergo improbus prædo et avarus exactor in eum, qui nihil ipsius habebat, insurgere, et, dum vitiatae originis præiudicium generale persequitur, *chirographum quo nitebatur excedit*, ab illo iniquitatis exigens poenam, in quo nullam reperit culpam.”

But he had reckoned without his host:

“Solvitur itaque letiferæ pactionis malesuada conscriptio, et *per iniustitiam plus petendi, totius debiti summa vacuatur*. Fortis ille

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the temptation, see *Serm.* xli. 3; col. 273, and *Serm.* xlii. 3; col. 277-278.

nectitur suis vinculis et omne commentum maligni in caput ipsius retorquetur. Ligato mundi principe, captivitatis vasa rapiuntur.”<sup>1</sup>

In another sermon we find a similar though fuller synthesis :

The Word was made flesh to condemn the devil in himself. “*Ut de peccato damnaret peccatum et diaboli opus diaboli opere solveretur.*” In the previous sermon we had been told that the devil saw in Christ only His human weakness, in this one we hear that Satan had also reasons to believe in Christ’s eminent virtue, and that it was for this very reason that the devil was so anxious to secure Christ and thereby strengthen his own dominion :

“*Inimicus enim humani generis universitati lethale vulnus intulerat, nec poterat declinare ius ferreum dedititii seminis captiva progenies. Unde, cum in tot generationibus mortali sibi lege subiectis unum videret . . . cuius virtutes super omnes totius temporis sanctos miraretur excellere, securum se fore credidit de perpetuitate sui iuris, si nulla iustitiæ merita mortis iura superare potuissent.*”

Hence the devil resolved to run the risks of his adventure :

“*Famulis itaque suis et stipendiariis vehementius incitatis, in præiudicium suum sævit : et dum putat aliquid sibi debere quem potuisset occidere, non vidit libertatem singularis innocentiae, similitudinem persequendo naturæ. Non autem errabat in genere, sed falebatur in crimine. Sed quia hostem humani generis latebat consilium misericordiæ Dei . . . , perstitit in eum furere, in quo nihil suum poterat invenire.*”

To realise, only when it was too late, how foolish he had been :

“*Nam malignitati eius hoc magis potuisset prodesse si parceret, et se ab effusione eius sanguinis abstineret. . . . Sed lucem tenebræ non comprehenderunt.*”<sup>2</sup>

In yet another passage St. Leo adverts to this sin

<sup>1</sup> *Serm.* xxii. 3-4 ; col. 196-197.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* lxix. 3-4 ; col. 377-378.



of the devil's, and adds that he would not have lost his rights had he not put Christ to death :

"Nec ipse diabolus intellexit quod, sæviendo in Christum, suum destrueret principatum, quia antiquæ fraudis iura non perderet, si se a Domini Iesu sanguine contineret." <sup>1</sup>

Having committed his act of unjust aggression, the devil's doom was sealed :

"Exaltatus Christus Iesus in ligno retorsit mortem in mortis auctorem . . . , admittens in se antiqui hostis audaciam, qui in obnoxiam sibi sæviendo naturam etiam ibi ausus est exactor esse debiti, ubi nullum potuit vestigium invenire peccati. Evacuatum est igitur generale illud venditionis nostræ et lethale chirographum ; et pactum captivitatis in ius transiit Redemptoris." <sup>2</sup>

Thus did the devil, all unwittingly, co-operate in the Atonement :

"Si enim nosse potuisset Iudæorum animos mansuetudine potius temperare studuisset, ne omnium captivorum amitteret servitutem. Fefellit ergo eum malignitas sua ; intulit supplicium Filio Dei, quod cunctis filiis hominum in remedium verteretur. . . . Impiæ manus furentium, dum proprio incumbent scelери, famulatæ sunt Redemptori." <sup>3</sup>

We have not been sparing in our choice of texts ; possibly the reader may think that we have multiplied them needlessly. But we wished to show that in the many allusions to the devil made by St. Leo we find really nothing beyond the views of St. Augustine. The devil's defeat is legally and morally justified by his criminal abuse of power.

The same theory is to be found in later writers ; for instance in Fulgentius Ferrandus, a deacon of Carthage, in the sixth century :

"Ecce veniet princeps mundi huius et in me inveniet nihil, nihil utique peccati. Nam plena in illo fuit natura matris, id est nostra, quam velut sibi aliquid deberet, antiquus ille peccati fenerator

<sup>1</sup> *Serm.* lx. 3 ; col. 344.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* lxi. 4 ; col. 348.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* lxii. 3 ; col. 351.

invasit . . . et per indebitam exactionem quidquid ei debebatur amisit, iuste victus et iuste punitus. . . . Hæc namque fuit iustitia Dei ut per illam carnem vinceretur mortis auctor, quam vicerat in Adam. . . . Si alia esset natura carnis, in qua non peccaverat Christus et mortuus est, non per iustitiam, sed per potentiam diabolus vinceretur. *Oportebat autem per iustitiam vinci.*"<sup>1</sup>

And again in St. Cæsarius of Arles :

"In gremium Patris de mali persuasoris iure transfudit [Salvator]. . . . Vidit [diabolus] servos quondam suos, inique a se occupatos, per agnitionem Christi ingenuitati traditos, et se causæ præiudicio cecidisse, et *se plus petendi incurrisse discrimen*. Quo modo plus petendi? Siquidem cum homo ei per peccati obedientiam debere-tur, ille Deum specie hominis deceptus appetiit, et in ipsum cæli dominatorem parricidas manus inferre præsumpsit. Et subito per tantum nefas etiam *crimen maiestatis incurrit*; ac sic hominem, quem violentus tenebat, proscriptus amisit."<sup>2</sup>

We may finish up with St. Gregory the Great<sup>3</sup>:

"Superbum diabolum prudentia Dei potius maluit dicere quam fortitudine esse percussum. Non enim, ait, fortitudo, sed prudentia eius percussit superbum (Job, xxvi. 12). Nam quamvis, propter naturam simplicem, Dei fortitudo sapientia sit, Dominus tamen diabolum, *quantum ad faciem spectat, non virtute sed ratione superavit*. Ipse namque diabolus, in illa nos parentis primi radice supplantans, sub captivitate sua *quasi iuste tenuit* hominem, qui, libero arbitrio conditus, ei iniusta suadenti consensit."

The reader will notice that Gregory here differs from the previous writers in stating that the right of the devil over us was not rigorously just, but "quasi just." Elsewhere however he forgets this restriction :

"Cadens a sublimibus, humanas mentes *iure possedit*, quia in culpæ suo vinculo volentes astrinxit."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> FULG. FERR. *Ep. III. ad Anatol.* 5.—*P.L.* lxvii. ; col. 893.

<sup>2</sup> CÆSAR. ARELAT. *Homil. III.<sup>a</sup> de Paschate*.—*P.L.* lxvii. ; col. 1049. "*Locus peregregius*," as Thomassinus calls it.—*De Inc. Verbi*, lib. i. c. iii. 10.

<sup>3</sup> GREGOR. MAGN. *Moral.* lib. xvii. c. xxx. 46-47.—*P.L.* lxxvi. ; col. 32-33.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 22-41.—*P.L.* lxxv. ; col. 575.

At any rate when our Saviour made His appearance, the devil first endeavoured to overcome Him by temptation, and failing in this he sought to put Him to death :

“Qui ad interiora non valuit ad eius se exteriora convertit, ut, quia mentis virtute victus est, eum quem decipere tentatione non valuit, carnis saltem videretur morte superare. . . . Sed ubi potuit aliquid facere, tibi ex omni parte devictus est; et unde accepit exterius potestatem dominicæ carnis occidendæ, inde interior potestas eius, qua nos tenebat, occisa est. Ipse namque interius victus est, dum quasi vicit exterius; et quia *nos iure debitores mortis tenuit, iure in nobis ius mortis amisit*, quia per satellites suos eius carnem perimendam oppetiit, in quo nil ex culpæ debito invenit. Bene itaque dictum est: Prudentia eius percussit superbum, quia antiquus hostis, *per excessum præsumptionis suæ, eum etiam perdidit quem iniquæ persuasionis lege possedit*; et dum audacter eum in quo nihil sibi competeat appetiit, *iure illum quem quasi iuste tenebat amisit* . . . , ut inde eum qui sub ipso erat perderet, unde cum illo qui super ipsum est congregari præsumpsisset.”

Hence from the time of Augustine to that of Leo the doctrine underwent no alteration. The ransom-theory disappeared with Origen's own special school and the theory which took its place, though it started from the same legal principle, avoided the odious consequences with which the earlier theory had been justly charged. The value of the principle remains debatable, and the expressions used may sometimes leave much to be desired, but in its general application the principle is not altogether absurd. St. Augustine's is a new theory, one which is independent of Origen's, and, though not altogether satisfactory, at least is quite harmless. Hence we can only marvel that its existence should have escaped those historians of dogma whose critical sense is elsewhere so acute as to discern distinctions which to most of us are quite imperceptible.



## CHAPTER XXIII

THE POETICAL FORM : DISCOURSES AND METAPHORS  
— ST. AMBROSE — EUSEBIUS OF EMESA — ST.  
GREGORY THE GREAT

WHATEVER the theory adopted by the Fathers to justify the devil's defeat, the legal theory of a ransom, or the political theory of rights exceeded, the result is always the same. Christ's death was a striking victory by which the devil's power was broken and mankind snatched from his tyranny; Satan is therefore vanquished and despoiled. As, after all, this is the only really important matter, and the positive fact which all these theories endeavour with varying success to justify, the reader will not be surprised to find it lying as a residue at the bottom of all these various systems. But this fact was too closely bound up with the faith not to be dealt with copiously; moreover this fact was one which evoked too many sense-images for it to remain for any length of time a mere abstract conception. What people need is a figure which can illustrate and animate the realities dearest to their hearts. As was to be expected, the Fathers never allowed an occasion to pass without recalling the devil's defeat. They took pleasure in painting this picture, they exhausted the treasure of their fancy in heightening its colour, they brought into use every article in their rhetorical arsenal to embellish the scene. Side by side with that logical development of ideas which we have just witnessed, a poetical development of metaphors and discourses

was also going on, and it is to this new aspect of the matter that we must now turn our attention; we shall find it by no means the least instructive part of an exceedingly interesting doctrine.

## I

The devil reigned supreme over mankind, whom he had brought into bondage through sin, and all of whose members were his in this world and in the next. Christ, who came to destroy sin and to lead men back to God, could not therefore fail to come into conflict with the "Enemy," nor could the latter, though unaware of the Godhead of Mary's Son, fail to perceive in Christ his most redoubtable foe. Hence sooner or later a struggle would ensue between the two champions, the prize of which would be our own souls. It was in this wise that the strife-metaphor first suggested itself to the minds of the Fathers.

The first episode of this strife was the Temptation; not only was Christ victorious, but by this sentence: "Get thee hence, Satan," He reminded him of his apostasy. To many of the Fathers these words seemed to sound the knell of Satan's dominion:

"Denudans eum per hoc nomen et se ostendens qui erat . . . Apostata autem Dei angelus *per illius destruitur vocem traductus quis esset* et victus a Filio hominis servante Dei præceptum."

These words belong to Irenæus,<sup>1</sup> but St. Hilary says the same<sup>2</sup>:

"Temeritatis tantæ congruum exitum tulit cum et criminum suorum in Satana nomen audivit et Dominum Deum suum adorandum in homine cognovit."

In another passage St. Hilary even seems to say

<sup>1</sup> IREN. *Adv. hæreses*, v. 21, 2 and 3.—*P.G.* vii.; col. 1181-1182.

<sup>2</sup> HILAR. *In Matth.* iii. 4.—*P.L.* ix.; col. 930.

that these words of themselves sufficed to bind the devil :

“*Ligatus est ergo tum, cum Satanias a Domino nuncupatus, ipsa nequitie sue nuncupatione constrictus est*” (*In Matth. xii. 16*).

But according to most of the Fathers the devil in the first skirmish was merely repulsed, and beat a retreat to wait “his hour.” This hour came at the Passion. To gain his end the devil fanned into a flame the hatred of the Pharisees, whom St. Leo styles “his slaves and hirelings.”<sup>1</sup> But his greatest help came from Judas, as is hinted even in the gospels.<sup>2</sup> In fact when Christ, speaking to Judas, said : “*Quod facis fac citius,*” He was, according to St. Cyril of Alexandria, really speaking to the devil, that He might stimulate him to rush headlong to his own destruction.<sup>3</sup> In a word, as Ambrosiaster says, the crucifixion was the work of the demons : “*Consilio ac voluntate illorum crucifixus est Christus.*”<sup>4</sup>

But the devil was wreaking vengeance on himself, for, though Christ seemed at first to fail, He rose again as victor. The Fathers delight in describing the marvellous contrast by which God chose to make death His triumph. “Never,” exclaims Chrysostom, “had the devil been so shamed. He had expected to capture Christ, and instead of this, he had actually lost all those whom he held in thrall ; when Christ’s body was nailed to the Cross, even the dead arose. The devil received his death blow from a dead man. He, the athlete, when he thought his adversary already

<sup>1</sup> “*Famulis itaque suis et stipendiariis vehementius incitatis.*” *Serm. lxi. 3.—P.L. liv. ; col. 377.*

<sup>2</sup> LUC. xxii. 3 : “*Intravit Satanias in Iudam.*” *Cp. IOAN. xiii. 2.*

<sup>3</sup> CYRIL. ALEX. *In Ioan. lib. ix.—P.G. lxxiv. ; col. 146-147.*

<sup>4</sup> PS. AMBR. 1 *Cor. ii. 8.—P.L. xvii. ; col. 194.*



dead, was himself slain. They engaged in single combat (ὥσπερ μονομαχείον); Christ was wounded by death, but the wounded Christ slew death.”<sup>1</sup>

This great duel which is thus alluded to by St Chrysostom is described in detail by St. Ambrose<sup>2</sup>:

“Habent hoc luctatores ut se subiciant iis quibus congregiuntur atque luctantur, ut opprimi posse videantur: et subito, cum superati æstimantur, elidunt [?], et quadam arte se versant ut effundant superiorem. Cadit qui portabatur et is qui portabat superior invenitur, ut sternat urgentem. Spiritualis utique palæstra Dominus Iesus, onera nostra suscipiens, in illa se passionis suæ congressione subiecit; et in infirmitatis specie, ut eum adversarius hominem parem ceteris iudicaret, quem facile posset opprimere, divinitatis arma deposuit, humanitatis tegmen assumpsit. Securus victoriæ, propius tentator accessit: in costa eum telo militis voluit vulnerare, reputans et hunc sicut Adam per costam posse prosterni. Sed vulneratus latere Dominus Iesus vitam produxit e vulnere, evacuavit omne peccatum, deiecit adversarium, et in illa sui corporis sepultura, cum æstimaretur oppressus, elisus sua se virtute versavit: cecidit adversarius, Dominus resurrexit.”

So well did the devil feel his end approaching that, according to St. Jerome, it was he who implored Christ, through the mouth of the Pharisees, to come down from the cross:

“Statim enim ut crucifixus est Dominus, senserunt virtutem crucis et intellexerunt fractas esse vires suas: et hoc agunt ut de cruce descendat.”

This was the last tardy effort of the Tempter, and it failed to influence Christ:

“Sed Dominus, sciens adversariorum insidias, permanet in patibulo ut diabolum destruat.”<sup>3</sup>

The same idea is to be found in John Cassian, who takes us even deeper into the devil’s feelings. When

<sup>1</sup> IOAN. CHRYS. *In Coloss. hom.* vi. 3.—*P.G.* lxii.; col. 340-341.

<sup>2</sup> AMBROS. *Ps.* xl. 13.—*P.L.* xiv.; col. 1073.

<sup>3</sup> HIERON. *In Matth.* lib. iv.—*P.L.* xxvi.; col. 211.

uttering his taunt, Satan was hoping to excite Christ to revenge, and thus make Him forget the Atonement: "*Ut desereret sacramentum, dum ulcisceretur iniuriam.*"<sup>1</sup>

On other occasions the Fathers turn their attention to the unjust and cruel side of the devil's attack. For this the strife-metaphor which presupposes fair play between the combatants becomes inadequate, and the devil is therefore compared to a wild beast. "To vanquish Death and the devil," says Eusebius of Cæsarea, "the Word of God deigned to use human weapons. He delivered His mortal part as a prey to the beast (*εἰς βορὰν τῷ θηρίῳ*). His body when nailed to the cross showed as clearly as in a theatre that He was mortal, and death overtaking Him like a ferocious beast (*οἷα θῆρ δεινὸς*) showed that He was this really. Then, afterwards, the power of life became victorious over death by making a mortal body to be immortal."<sup>2</sup> In fewer words Cyril of Alexandria was afterwards to say the same: "Death sprang on him like a wild beast; but He vanquished it and delivered us from its tyranny."<sup>3</sup>

The explanation of the devil's designs is that he saw in Christ a common man. God's plan consisted in hiding the Divine nature of the Saviour that Satan might approach Him without fear and thus prove his own undoing. In this trickery the Fathers merely saw another proof of God's wisdom, who by His cleverness was able to inveigle even the Father of Lies in order the better to overcome him.

According to Ambrose, the Blessed Virgin's

<sup>1</sup> IOAN. CASS. *De Inc. Christi*, vii. 13.—*P.L.* i. ; col. 231.

<sup>2</sup> EUS. CÆS. *De Theophania*, 3.—*P.G.* xxiv. ; col. 617.

<sup>3</sup> CYRIL. ALEX. *De recta fide ad reginas*, *Orat.* ii.<sup>a</sup>—*P.G.* lxxvi. 1375.

marriage, our Lord's own silence concerning His Godhead, and His imposing a like silence on His disciples, were all intended to deceive the devil:

"Fallendi principis mundi fuisse consilium etiam Apostolus declaravit: si enim cognovissent, nunquam Dominum maiestatis crucifixissent [1 Cor. ii. 7-8]; hoc est nunquam me redimi Domini morte fecissent. *Fefellit ergo pro nobis, fefellit ut vinceret.*"<sup>1</sup>

Farther on he says: "*Sic fallit, ut vincat; sic adhuc vincit, ut fallat.*"<sup>2</sup> In fact this was His plan: "*In se voluit principem mundi fallere, in discipulis triumphare.*"<sup>3</sup> And he explains these sayings with a metaphor. We were in the devil's snare, having been enticed thither by the bait of pleasure:

"Non capit laqueus nisi ante esca te ceperit. Dum prædam petis, laqueo ipse te nectis. Esca laquei avaritia est; esca diaboli luxuria est, quibus nos vult inescare, non pascere. Quo modo igitur hos laqueos evitabimus? . . . quod venturus est in hanc vitam qui contereret laqueum fraude diaboli præparatum." <sup>4</sup>

Christ in order to catch the devil held out as a bait his own body:

"Sed non poterit melius conteri laqueus, nisi prædam aliquam diabolo demonstrasset; ut dum ille festinat ad prædam, suis laqueis ligaretur. Quæ potuit esse præda, nisi corpus? *Oportuit igitur hanc fraudem diabolo fieri, ut susciperet corpus Dominus Iesus, et corpus hoc corruptibile, corpus infirmum, ut crucifigeretur.*" <sup>5</sup>

St. Gregory of Nyssa's words will still be in the reader's memory. It was just that the deceiver

<sup>1</sup> AMBROS. *In Luc.* ii. 3.—*P.L.* xv.; col. 1553. The PSEUDO-GREGORY THAUMATURGUS expounds likewise the words *Sine modo* said by Christ to the Baptist. *Hom.* iv.—*P.G.* x.; col. 1184-1185.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* iv. 19; col. 1618.

<sup>3</sup> *In Ps.* cxviii. iii. 34; *ibid.* col. 1235.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* cxviii. xiv. 37; *ibid.* col. 1405-1406.

<sup>5</sup> *In Luc.* iv. 11 and 12; *ibid.* col. 1616.



should be deceived. "The devil had misled man by the bait of pleasure; he in turn was deceived by the human appearance of the Saviour."<sup>1</sup>

Historians are apt to consider these texts as complementary to the ransom-theory, and then to reproach the Fathers with describing God's conduct as just, whereas they simultaneously admit Him to have deceived the devil. But these historians are acting unjustly when they bring together passages which in the minds of their writers were not intended to be juxtaposed. The texts which we have just quoted, and in which it is admitted that God wished to deceive, and in fact did deceive the devil, manifestly refer to the providential plan of the Incarnation and not to the contract in which it was supposed that Christ's blood had been paid to the devil for our redemption.

The best proof of this, apart from the texts themselves, is that we find similar ideas even among those of the Fathers to whom the very idea of a ransom was hateful: "Our Enemy in his rashness fell on the visible Adam, but was vanquished, for He on whom he fell was God."<sup>2</sup>

"The devil thought himself invincible because he had taken us with the promise of being made like unto God; he himself was taken by the flesh of the Saviour; he fancied that he was after a son of Adam and he fell upon God."<sup>3</sup> Here we find the very words of St. Gregory of Nyssa in a work of his namesake of

<sup>1</sup> GREGOR. NYSS. *Orat. catech. magna*, 26.—*P.G.* xlv. ; col. 68. ἀπατᾶται καὶ αὐτὸς τῷ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου προβλήματι, ὁ προαπατήσας τὸν ἄνθρωπον τῷ τῆς ἡδονῆς δελεάσματι.

<sup>2</sup> GREG. NAZ. *Orat.* xxxix. 2.—*P.G.* xxxvi. ; col. 335.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 13 ; col. 349. θεότητος ἐλπίδι δελεάσας ἡμᾶς, σαρκὸς προβλήματι δελεάζεται· ἵν' ὡς τῷ Ἀδὰμ προσβαλὼν, τῷ θεῷ περιπέσῃ.

Nazianzus. St. Paulinus of Nola, too, was later on to write :

“ Ut illum deceptorem nostrum *mutua quasi deceptione confunderet*, per mysterium pietatis suæ dignatus est unigenitus Dei Filius ipsam nostræ fragilitatis suscipere naturam, ut de ipsa quam deceperat zabulus vinceretur.”<sup>1</sup>

Hence the intention of deceiving the devil, which is ascribed to God by the Fathers, is quite independent of the ransom-theory, and it is quite curious enough in itself to be respected, and not made, in addition, grossly immoral.

## II

When once the devil had been caught, his defeat was certain, because, all unknowing, he had fallen on God. This defeat called up many expressive figures. Of these we find a kind of summary in a singular sermon of the Hermit St. Anthony recorded by St. Athanasius: “The devil may vaunt his power, but he lies; in his words there is no truth. For, in spite of all his boastings, it is none the less true that like a dragon he was hooked by the Saviour. He was harnessed like a beast of burden, like a fugitive slave he had his nose pierced by a ring and his lips by a bracelet. He was caged like a starling that we might all come and laugh at him.”<sup>2</sup>

Coming from St. Anthony, such realistic language will surprise no one, but the metaphors thus brought together by the saintly hermit did not, all of them, prove equally acceptable to subsequent writers.

St. Gregory of Nyssa retains the figure of the hook. “God,” he says, “hid Himself beneath the veil of our nature; the devil, like a voracious monster

<sup>1</sup> PAULIN. NOL. *Ep.* xxiii. 44.—*P.L.* lxi. ; col. 285.

<sup>2</sup> ATHANAS. *Vita S. Antonii*, 24.—*P.G.* xxvi. ; col. 880.

of the deep, in swallowing the bait of His manhood, was caught by the hook of the Godhead.”<sup>1</sup>

St. Augustine brought into use a new metaphor, of which the singularity is a match for its realism. He holds that the devil was caught on the cross as a mouse in its trap :

“Venit Redemptor et victus est deceptor. Et quid fecit Redemptor noster captivatori nostro? Ad pretium nostrum *tetendit muscipulam crucem suam*: posuit ibi quasi escam sanguinem suum. Ille autem potuit sanguinem istum fundere, non meruit bibere. Et in eo quod fudit sanguinem non debitoris, iussus est reddere debitores.”<sup>2</sup>

In another passage, St. Augustine addresses the devil as follows:—

“Decepisti innocentes, fecisti nocentes. Occidisti innocentem; peremisti quem non debebas, redde quod tenebas. Quid ergo ad horam exultasti, quia invenisti in Christo carnem mortalem? *Muscipula tua est*: unde lætatus es, inde captus es.”<sup>3</sup>

Farther on he says of him :

“Seducendo primum hominem, occidit; occidendo novissimum, primum de laqueis perdidit. . . . Exultavit diabolus quando mortuus est Christus, et in ipsa morte Christi est diabolus victus: *tamquam in muscipula escam accepit*. Gaudebat ad mortem, quasi præpositus mortis. Ad quod gaudebat, inde illi tensum est. *Muscipula diaboli, crux Domini*; esca qua caperetur, mors Domini.”<sup>4</sup>

St. Leo confines himself to expressing in striking antitheses the devil's discomfiture :

“Malitia nocendi avida, dum irruit, ruit; dum capit, capta est; dum persequitur mortalem, incidit in Salvatorem.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> GREGOR. NYSS. *Orat. cat. magna*, 24; col. 66. *Cp. In Chr. resurrect. Orat.* 1<sup>a</sup>.—*P.G.* xlv. ; col. 607.

<sup>2</sup> AUGUST. *Serm.* cxxx. 2.—*P.L.* xxxviii. ; col. 726.

<sup>3</sup> *Serm.* cxxxiv. 6; col. 745.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* cclxiii. 1; col. 1210.

<sup>5</sup> LEO M. *Serm.* lx. 3.—*P.L.* liv. 4; col. 344.



“Clavi illi, qui manus Domini pedesque transfoderunt perpetuis diabolum fixere vulneribus.”<sup>1</sup>

Fulgentius Ferrandus prefers to return to the metaphor of the hook:

“Fides admonet vera Christum corpus habuisse verum, . . . tale quale nos habemus absque peccato: *tale in quo diabolus falleretur, ut, putans escam, deglutiret hamum.*”<sup>2</sup>

But the principal and most precious sign of the devil's defeat is the fact that his captives are released. Christ's blood shed by the devil was the ransom of the world. This is how St. Augustine embodies this idea:

“In sacco ferebat pretium nostrum: percussus est lancea, fusus est saccus et manavit pretium orbis terrarum.”<sup>3</sup>

Christ is a conquering hero who despoils His fallen foe:

“Cui vincto spolia detraxit et domum abstulit, nos scilicet quondam arma eius, regnique militiam in ius suum redegit.”<sup>4</sup>

These words are St. Hilary's, but Ambrose speaks in the same strain:

“Deprædatus est perdicem illum diabolum, abstulit ei male congregatas divitias multitudinis.”<sup>5</sup>

But a stronger figure of speech was required to express the supreme efficaciousness of Christ's death. Christ's flesh, which Satan had foolishly swallowed, was as an emetic which caused him to bring up his victims. This comparison belongs to St. Cyril of Jerusalem. “The Lord was to suffer for us, but, had the devil known Him, he would never have approached Him. . . . God, therefore, took a body to offer it to the devil as a bait. But instead of

<sup>1</sup> *Serm.* lxi. 4; col. 348.

<sup>2</sup> FULG. FERR. *Epistula III.*<sup>a</sup> *ad Anatolium*, 4.—*P.L.* lxxvii.; col. 893.

<sup>3</sup> AUGUST. *In Psalm.* xxi. 11, 28.—*P.L.* xxxvi.; col. 179.

<sup>4</sup> HILAR. *In Matth.* xii. 16.—*P.L.* ix.; col. 989.

<sup>5</sup> AMBROS. *Epist.* xxxii. 3.—*P.L.* xvi.; col. 1070.

feasting on it, as he had intended, Satan was forced to vomit all those that he had already devoured.”<sup>1</sup>

According to St. Proclus, bishop of Constantinople, Christ was the mystic fruit of which the prophet speaks: “He who by His biting taste brought bitterness to the bowels of Death who had swallowed Him.”<sup>2</sup> Farther on he tells us that “Death had to bring up Him whom, knowing not, it had swallowed.”<sup>3</sup> But it was not Christ alone, but the whole of mankind, who was delivered with Him. In a sermon, preached on a Good Friday, Proclus celebrates this victory in the following strain:—“To-day is the mystery of the great fight, the frightful trophy of the war with hell, the speedy and unspeakable defeat of the old Tyrant, the unthinkable victory which was gained by Him who became flesh for us. He attacked death by dying Himself, and He laid waste hell like God strong and mighty. What words can worthily recount such a marvel? What tongue can tell the terrors of that struggle? To-day the prophecies are fulfilled. To-day hell unwittingly drank fell poison. To-day Death received a dead man who yet lives. To-day the fetters were broken which the serpent had forged in Paradise. To-day those were delivered who for centuries had been slaves. To-day the thief broke into Paradise which for five thousand five hundred years had been effectually guarded by the flaming sword. To-day light shone in the darkness, and emptied the treasures of

<sup>1</sup> CYRIL. HIEROSOL. *Catech.* xii. 15.—*P.G.* xxxiii.; col. 741. Δέλεαρ τοῦ θανάτου γέγονε τὸ σῶμα, ἵνα ἐλπίσας καταπιεῖν ὁ δράκων, ἐξεμέσῃ καὶ τοὺς ἤδη καταποθέντας. *Cp.* CYRIL. ALEX. *In Ioan.* ii.—*P.G.* lxxiii.; col. 192.

<sup>2</sup> PROCL. CONSTANT. *Serm.* vi. 1.—*P.G.* lxxv.; col. 721.

<sup>3</sup> *Serm.* xiii. 2; col. 792. *Cp.* *Orat.* iv. 2; col. 712.

Death. To-day the King entered the prison. To-day the brazen gates and iron bolts were broken down by Him, who, being received as an ordinary mortal, laid waste hell as a God. To-day Christ, the corner-stone, shook the ancient foundations of Death. He snatched away Adam and saved Abel and overthrew the infernal abode. To-day those who wept, those whom Death had devoured, exclaim triumphantly, 'O Death, where is thy victory, O Death, where is thy sting?'<sup>1</sup> To bring about all this good, God had to become man. "He required a lamb's fleece to attract the wolf who was devouring men."<sup>2</sup>

What is really wonderful in all this is the fact that Satan owes his loss to his own appetite, having thus become an unwilling agent in effecting our redemption.<sup>3</sup>

In St. John Damascene we find a somewhat incoherent synthesis of all these figures. "The devil," he says, following the lead of St. Gregory Nazianzen, "caught man by the bait of deification; he himself was caught by the bait of the flesh."<sup>4</sup> "Death crept towards the Saviour; he swallowed the bait of His body, but he was caught on the hook of His Godhead. Having tasted this guiltless and life-giving body Death was destroyed and had to let loose all those he had devoured. . . . For as darkness takes to flight at the approach of light, so does corruption vanish at the touch of life; life is given to all and corruption is bestowed on the corrupter."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Serm.* xi. 1; col. 781-784.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* xiii. 2; col. 793.

<sup>3</sup> *Cp.* Ps.-AMBROS. *Eph.* v. 2—*P.L.* xvii.; col. 394 and LEO MAGN *Serm.* lxii. 3.—*P.L.* liv.; col. 351.

<sup>4</sup> IOAN. DAMASC. *De orthodoxa fide*, iii. 1.—*P.G.* xciv.; col. 981.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 27; col. 1096-1097.



The above enables us to see how the Fathers could paint in high and familiar colours the defeat of the devil and our own deliverance.

### III

But these ideas, which the Fathers have so far only touched on, will be dealt with at much greater length by later writers.

The works of St. Pacian, bishop of Barcelona, already contain a description in detail of Christ's struggle with Satan. Christ had come to save men, and He did so by His guiltlessness. On catching sight of Him the devil began to tremble, foreseeing his fate:

“Sub hoc innocentiae patrocínio, ut primum defensionem nominis aggressus est Christus in ipsa carne peccati, continuo ille peccati inobedientiæ parens, qui primos homines aliquando deceperat, festinare incœpit, æstquare, trepidare.”

He, however, brought his hellish legions into line (*armatur in aciem spiritalem adversus immaculatum*), and proceeded to tempt Christ. In this first attempt he was foiled. Had he been sensible he would have given in, but this he refused to do, and preferred to stir up the Pharisees to ensnare Him by trickery, and, when this failed, to attack Him overtly to the end of making Him commit some sin:

“Ut vel indignitate rerum vel dolore pœnarum aliquid iniustum aut faceret aut diceret, atque ita perderet hominem quem gerebat et relinqueretur anima eius apud inferos, quibus una lex fuit ut peccatorem tenerent.”

But Christ remained unalterably patient and submitted even unto death; thereby He achieved His victory.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PACIAN, *Serm. de Bapt.* 3-4.—*P.L.* xiii. ; col. 1091-1092.

The Saviour's struggle with Satan likewise proved a source of inspiration to St. Cyril of Alexandria.

"The prince of this world," he says, "is judged because he assailed Christ, over whom he had no right, for Christ was sinless. Hence He broke the devil's power and put him to flight, and made him to be the slave of those whose master he had been. . . . If we wish to learn more of this combat with the devil let us turn to the Gospel. Christ was led into the desert to be tempted. There He fasted forty days and forty nights; He did not will to fast any longer than the fasters of old, lest His Godhead should become known to the enemy and make him relinquish the contest. This was why, after the lapse of forty days, He manifested His human nature by allowing hunger to draw nigh. So far the devil had avoided Him, suspecting the import of the many wonders he had noticed attending Christ's life. He had heard the angels singing at His birth; he had seen the star which led the Magi to His cradle; he had seen Him from His very babyhood following justice and refraining from evil; he had also heard the Baptist speak of Him as the Lamb of God, and the Father Himself proclaim Him His own beloved Son. These many portents made the devil nervous, and prevented him from approaching the champion of our nature. But when he saw Him hungry, and in need of material food, and unable to prolong His fast beyond the normal number of days, he summoned courage and drew nigh, confident of an easy victory."<sup>1</sup>

"In a fight in which one wishes to pierce with his

<sup>1</sup> Oddly enough we find a similar piece of exegesis in THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA. *In Matth.* iv.—*P.G.* lxxvi.; col. 705. *Cp. In Luc.* iv.; *ibid.* col. 717-720.

dart the other who is clad in mail from head to foot, it is first necessary that he should scan his adversary to discover his weak point, and the naked spot against which he may hurl his shaft. The devil, who saw Christ in His armour of righteousness, had long sought a weak spot, and this he thought he had found when he saw Him hungry, for in this weakness he recognised the passion of Adam His ancestor. Hence, drawing nigh to Him, he said to Him, 'Command that these stones be made bread' [MATT. iv. 3]. This he would never have dared to have done, had not the Saviour willed to suffer hunger. This is apparent from the sequence of events for, having once been vanquished, and convinced that Christ was the Messias foretold by the prophets, he could no longer endure His presence, but besought Him to spare him from torment (MATT. viii. 29; LUKE. viii. 28). But now he speaks quite confidently, 'Command that these stones be made bread.' I heard the voice from heaven calling thee the Son of God, but I shall not believe it until I have been taught its truth by experience. Show me that thou art really what thou art described to be. If thou canst do so then I shall depart, and shall not fight with thee. I know too well how great is the distance between us. Show me therefore a sign and convince me. But Christ concealed His Godhead, and like a man answered: 'Not in bread alone does man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.'

"Hearing these words the devil felt himself outdone, but seeing the man, he did not altogether despair. This was why he again, and yet once again, tempted Christ. But being each time outwitted he took to flight, shamed at his defeat, and hourly expecting to be deprived of his kingdom. He had



exhausted his ammunition, had tried all his tricks, and had found Him invincible. Thereupon the angels, who had been beholding the struggle from afar, came to minister to, and crown the victor; congratulating themselves on the deliverance of men, their brethren, and on the repulse of the Enemy."

The reader will perceive that this system rests on Christ's perfect manhood, which Cyril, in concluding, vindicates against Apollinarius. Had Christ not assumed human nature His victory would be of no avail to us, for we should have nothing in common with Him. Moreover the devil might well congratulate himself on having fought with God, even though the fight resulted in his discomfiture, for it would be a most glorious thing to have been vanquished by God.

"Hence the devil might well have argued with God as follows :—It was not I, O Lord and Creator of all, who wished to fight with Thee, for I know Thy power and dignity, and I acknowledge Thine authority. I admit I am Thy bondman, though I suffer for my fall. I even acknowledge my defeat by the angels and the heavenly choirs to which I once belonged. But I undertook to fight against him whom Thou didst fashion out of the dust unto Thine own image, whom Thou didst also endow with reason and place in Paradise until the day should dawn for him to be vanquished, scourged, and sentenced to death. Lead such a man into the arena, and bid him fight with me, and be Thou Thyself the judge. If Thou wilt be his trainer, teach him how to fight, show him the way to victory, instruct him as Thou wilt, only, beyond this, give him no unfair help, for I am not so blind or rash as to wish to fight against the Creator. In such wise

might the devil reproach Christ, had He come, not as a man, but as God to fight for man.”<sup>1</sup>

The same theme was to be enlarged upon by Theodoret, bishop of Cyr, who explains still more fully the results of the struggle:

“After His baptism, the Son of God, who had become flesh, proceeded to engage in a contest with the tyrant. The arena was the desert, the spectators were the angels, and the enemy was the enemy of truth. Being on his guard by the voice from heaven which had been heard when Christ was baptised, and bearing in mind the predictions of the prophets, he was not anxious to commence the fight; but he was forced into it. The champion of our nature feared not His adversary, nor did He motion off the savage beast, on the contrary he incited him to the combat, being anxious to gain His first victory. . . .” The result was the threefold Temptation and Christ’s triumph.<sup>2</sup>

But Christ’s greatest victory was achieved at His Passion, and, following the example of Homer’s heroes, haranguing their fallen enemy, Christ, according to Theodoret, thus addressed His rival<sup>3</sup>: “Behold now, thou art caught at last in thine own snare. Thine own sword has pierced thy heart, thy bow is broken, thou hadst dug a pit, and behold thou hast fallen into it. The irons thou didst forge have bound thy own wrists. Tell me now why thou didst crucify my body and deliver it to death? What sin didst thou find in me? What law did I break? Look on it carefully, now that thou hast it naked on the cross

<sup>1</sup> CYRIL. ALEX. *De Incarnat. Dom.* 13-16.—*P.G.* lxxv.; col. 1437-1444. *Cp.* 24; col. 1464.

<sup>2</sup> THEODORET, *De Providentia, Sermo x.*—*P.G.* lxxxiii.; col. 752.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* col. 757-760. *Cp.* 761.

before thee. Look at my tongue which knows no guile, and at my ears which are free from fault; at my eyes through which no corruption entered, at my hands which have ever refrained from injustice, and are beautiful in their righteousness, at my feet which have never walked in the council of the ungodly, to use the saying of the prophet, but which have always trod the way of justice. Examine, as closely as thou wilt, all the parts of my body and all the motions of my heart. If thou canst find the least sin, then, I am thine, for the penalty of sin is death. But if in me thou findest nothing which the Divine law forbids, if on the contrary thou findest everything which it commands, then I forbid thee to retain me. To do this thou hast no right, and moreover, I shall bring out of prison the others and shut thee up in their place, because thou hast transgressed the law of God.

“The Divine law condemned sinners to death but thou hast delivered to death Him who knew no sin. Thy boundless greed was the cause of this final act of cruelty. But because thou unjustly seizedst one thou shalt be justly deprived of all the rest. Thou hast eaten what was forbidden and thou shalt bring up all that thou hast already swallowed. Thou shalt thus become an example to all to teach them to be satisfied with what they receive and not to covet what is not theirs. . . . Hence, since thou, who hadst received power over sinners, hast assailed a body which was free from sin, thou shalt lose thy dominion and thy tyranny. I shall deliver them all from death, not through mercy alone but through mercy and justice, not by despotic power, but by righteous power, for I have paid the debt of the human race. . . . By undergoing an undeserved death I destroyed that death which was deserved; they were rightly



imprisoned, but I, being imprisoned unjustly, freed them all. Hence, avenger of sin, the debt of nature has been destroyed. It has been nailed to the cross and sin is no more. The eyes of this body have paid the debt of those eyes which had looked on evil ; my ears have atoned for guilty ears and my tongue for evil tongues ; my hands for guilty hands and all my members for sinful members. The debt is paid, and the sinners must now be set at liberty and led back to their country."

The same struggle between Christ and Satan is described at equal length by Eusebius of Alexandria.

He admits that God might have gained His victory without becoming man, but in that case the devil might have boasted as follows: "I overcame man and I was overcome by God. Such a defeat does not mean much. I deceived man and despoiled him of Paradise and of God's grace and made him the bondman of sin, with sin I brought in death and preached revolt and caused apostasy. After all this was done, I was overcome by God."<sup>1</sup>

To prevent such bravado the Word of God became flesh. It was only at His baptism that the devil began to suspect His nature ; "when John had said of Him 'Behold the Lamb of God' and when the voice from heaven was heard, the devil was astonished. Before this he had not known Jesus, or rather he had taken Him for a common man. He had seen Him born and growing like an ordinary child and he perceived not the hidden mystery of His life. Hence he concerned himself little with Him and took it for granted that He, like other men, belonged to him. But after His baptism he began to ask himself, might not this Man, after all, be the Christ who is to re-

<sup>1</sup> EUS. ALEX. *Sermo* iii.—*P.G.* lxxxvi. ; col. 329.

deem the world? What then shall I do? How shall I ascertain whether He be the Word? For if it is indeed He, then He is come to destroy me. Woe is me, my power is at an end." Hence the devil was much put about to know what to do. Finally he resolved on tempting Christ. After all, possibly the Baptist's words did not proceed from God; this thought was reassuring. But how explain the voice from heaven? Hence the Lord, seeing that the devil was in a fright and ready to flee, began to show that He was a man; He hid His Godhead and allowed Himself to be tempted. Our author then comments at length on the Temptation and shows how Christ avoided Satan's snares yet without allowing His Divinity to transpire. He then concludes: "It was for us that Christ underwent these temptations. He might have repelled the Demon, but He preferred to veil His Divine nature so as to seduce the Enemy and make us all partakers in His Resurrection."<sup>1</sup>

The Temptation and the Passion were invariably pointed to as the principal episodes in which the devil's defeat was evidenced. These episodes, being simple, did not lend themselves to much variety of expression. But the devil's defeat which began on earth was completed in hell. Here Christian fancy was to find a new and fertile field.

#### IV

In 1829, Augusti published three so far unedited homilies, ascribing them to Eusebius of Emesa. His ascription of them was called into question. Thilo attributed them to that Eusebius of Alexandria

<sup>1</sup> *Serm.* xi.; *ibid.* col. 373-380.

from whom we have already cited, whilst Fessler preferred another later Eusebius of Alexandria who is supposed to have lived in the seventh century. Among modern writers, Bardenhewer ascribes them to Eusebius of Alexandria<sup>1</sup> whilst the preferences of Mgr. Batiffol would seem to be for Eusebius of Emesa.<sup>2</sup>

Whoever the author may be, there is no doubt that these three discourses, which probably belong to the sixth century, form a definite whole. Augusti very happily described them as a "dramatic trilogy" on the defeat of the devil, as the "first beginning of the mystery-plays"<sup>3</sup> and as "a real Christian myth woven by popular fancy on the facts of the Gospel story, similarly to the Greek legends."<sup>4</sup> The work in question is too interesting from our point of view to be dismissed without consideration.

The piece comprises three acts or tableaux. In the first we are in hell at the moment of St. John the Baptist's arrival. He announces to the patriarchs the near advent of the Saviour. In their turn the prophets question him, each one reciting his own predictions as to the future Messiah. David, Isaias, Jeremias, and the others sketch His history from His virginal birth and His origin in heaven to His death and resurrection.

Whilst the prophets are thus talking among themselves, and bursting with expectation, Hades calls the devil and asks him: "What is the matter? Why all this bustle? Who then is the new-comer who has cheered them so mightily?"

<sup>1</sup> BARDENHEWER, *Les Pères de l'Église* (Paris, 1898), ii. pp. 13 and 236.

<sup>2</sup> BATIFFOL, *Anc. litt. grecque chrétienne* (3<sup>e</sup> éd. Paris, 1901), p. 253.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in *P.G.* lxxxvi. ; col. 467.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* col. 495-496.



“*The Devil*.—Thou needest not fear ; that fellow is John the Baptist. He gave me much trouble when on earth, because he gave testimony to that man of whom they were just now speaking, saying that he is the Saviour of Israel. I finally got rid of him by means of Herodias, and the pretended Saviour, instead of saving John, was so frightened by his death that he fled to Galilee, whereby I saw that he was only a man. Hence we need have no fear, but I own I got a fright myself.

“*Hades*.—Take care, brother, that thou lose not all, in trying to get too much. Just suppose the prophets ever succeeded in getting out of our clutches ; how ashamed we should be ! Yet they indeed have no punishment to undergo, but supposing even the condemned sinners should manage to escape, what a disaster that would spell. Take care not to become the laughing-stock of the world. My impression is that our prisoners are hatching a plot.

“*The Devil*.—Come now, I have already told thee that there is nothing to fear. I know my man and know that he is not to be feared. Jesus is but a man : he eats and drinks and sleeps ; his mother is called Mary ; his father, Joseph, is a carpenter ; they live at Nazareth. When he was born Herod tried to kill him, but they carried him to Egypt. That time he escaped me, but now I am sure of him and I warrant thee that I shall soon put him into thy hands. I am going to stir up the Jews ; they will drag him before the court and crucify him and then there will be an end to the whole business. Then I shall bring him down here and thou shalt see how the faces of thy guests will lengthen out. Come along, see that thy gates are kept well padlocked and then take thy rest.

Canst thou not see that they are trying to scare thee?"<sup>1</sup>

With this the dialogue ends, and the author proceeds to narrate the devil's snares, on which he piously comments. The next homily is devoted to exposing the treachery of Judas.<sup>2</sup>

In the third we find ourselves in the Passion. Christ is troubled, and says: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death." At these words the devil cannot restrain his delight, and forthwith rushes off to Hades. "Come along, make ready," he exclaims, "prepare quickly a safe hole in which to shut up that Jesus whom the prophets have stated is going to defeat us. The cross and nails and lance are all ready. I suborned one of his disciples. Make ready his room and in two days I shall be bringing him in. Gracious goodness, how much trouble he has already given me. It was useless for me to sow sickness and death, for, no sooner had I done so, than along he came and raised the dead and cured the sick, even the blind and the palsied. I and a whole crowd of my chums had taken possession of a fine young man. How Jesus found us out I don't pretend to know, but at any rate he came and cast us all out, and, knowing not where to go, we were actually obliged to ask his leave to enter a herd of swine."

The devil continues in this strain, recounting one by one all the miracles wrought, which so far as he was concerned were so many defeats. There was the case of the daughter of Jairus and that of the Canaanite woman, and worst of all that of Lazarus. "Him I really thought quite safe in thy hands, yet four days later, I am sure I don't know how—whether

<sup>1</sup> EUSEB. EMES. inter opp. EUS. ALEX.—*P.G.* lxxxvi. ; col. 509-520.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* col. 525-536.

thou wert nodding or hadst left thy post—he got clean away.

“*Hades*.—Dost thou mean then to bring down here him that delivered Lazarus? Don’t do anything so stupid. His power is tremendous, the very sound of his voice filled me with fear and left me powerless. How then canst thou propose to bring here one whose very voice I cannot stand? For goodness sake do nothing of the kind. If he comes he will upset everything, and let loose all my prisoners. I was particularly careful with that fellow Lazarus. I took care to make him rot, and as a matter of fact he was already smelling very strong and his members were falling to pieces. Yet, at a word from Jesus, Lazarus got up and escaped: his putrid body flying past me like a lion springing out of its den, or like an eagle in its flight. No, certainly, I want none of his like down here.

“*The Devil*.—Coward! After all the evil he had done me I never left the world nor ceased to assail men and thou, thou art discouraged and ready to cry mercy just because he has baffled thee once. When I saw that he was curing bodily ailments I started attacking people in their souls. I found a young man named Matthew; of him I made a capital oppressor of the poor; yet the same man was snatched from me by a word. I much regret the loss of so good a servant. However, thinking that he had been chosen because he was young, I sought another subject. I accordingly took possession of the little Zacchæus, of whom I made a usurer. He consoled me for the loss of Matthew, and I certainly never expected to lose him too, for he was both small and ugly. Yet he too was taken from me and changed into a foe. I then turned to the sinners, and I said to them: Sin



as much as you please. But he came and said the contrary and preached to them penance, and they all went over to him. Being foiled on every side, I at last bethought me of my old friends the Jews, and I stirred them up, them and their friends, against him. Put aside thy fears therefore and get ready a safe place in which to shut him.

“*Hades*.—I can't agree with your bad advice. What I say is, leave him alone and don't come bringing him here. I simply cannot abide him. What is there between him and thee, between the earthen and iron pot? He will break thee. Thou thyself hast just admitted that thou canst not stand against him and now thou art talking of bringing him here for him to despoil me utterly. Were he not the Son of God he could not have worked so many miracles. Were he a mere man he would not have been able to cure ailments and still less to convert publicans and sinners. I heard what the prophets said of him and how anxious my captives are for him to come. I know what John said when he arrived, and I much fear his coming.

“*The Devil*.—They were simply telling stories to scare thee.

“*Hades*.—Did not their stories come true in thy case? Jesus has treated thee as the prophets foretold. This thou admittest and yet thou pretendest that they lie where I am concerned.

“*The Devil*.—Thy power is great. Thy belly is of such capacity that it can never be filled, and yet thou fearest to receive a man!

“*Hades*.—Cease thy fooling. All are leaving thee to follow him; is it now thy wish also to break fellowship with me and go over to him?

“*The Devil*.—Thou hast received the whole world, and never yet been satisfied. Thou didst devour

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the prophets, and now, at the very thought of this one other man, my great enemy, thou art afraid. I know for certain that he is a man, for he fears death. Only a moment ago, when he learnt that his hour was come, he exclaimed: 'My soul is sorrowful, even unto death.'

"*Hades*.—I don't know him and I don't want to. But just listen. Those words were simply intended to deceive thee. Woe is thee, he uttered those words to ensnare thee. Leave him alone and let him be in peace.

"*The Devil*.—I have powerful helpers and I have no fear concerning the issue. I have on my side Annas, Caiphas, Judas and the whole crowd of the people. We can prevail when we will, only consent thou to receive him.

"*Hades*.—Go then and do what thou wilt. If thou prevail we shall shut him up here and thou shalt reign with the Jews. If otherwise, then he will come and free my prisoners and will chain thee and the Jews thy accomplices, and will deliver you all over to me, and all of us will then lead a life of misery."<sup>1</sup>

On receiving the consent of Hades the devil returns to the Jews and further excites their minds against Christ. But, as it turned out, the prudence of Hades was in the right as against the blind rashness of the devil. In another redaction we are informed of the subsequent events.

The devil, seeing the signs which accompanied the Saviour's death, understood that he was foiled, and he hurried back to Hades and shouted: "Quick, shut the gates that he may not enter and destroy our power." A little later the Saviour, followed by His angels, stood before the closed doors. The angels

<sup>1</sup> EUSEB, EMES. inter opp. EUS. ALEX.—P.G. lxxxvi.; col. 383-406.

thereupon intoned the Psalm *Attollite portas*: Behold the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. "If it is indeed He," said Hades, "what has He come here for?" "He has come to destroy thy power." Then Hades, turning to the devil, bitterly upbraided him for his rashness. "Did I not tell thee? Thou didst insist on making war on him, and here he has come to bind us." "What wilt thou!" answered the demon, "his words of seeming weakness misled me." But, without, the angels had again taken up their song and the Lord was already entering, victorious.<sup>1</sup>

This curious piece of drama is not alone of its kind; it is found in its entirety in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, which, by the best authorities, is considered to belong to the fifth century.<sup>2</sup> This narrative is lengthier but it is the same. The third discourse, especially, is so similar, or rather includes so many ideas and sentences identically the same, that we can only infer with Augusti that one writer made use of the other, unless indeed we are willing to admit that both drew their material as from a common source, out of the same popular traditions.<sup>3</sup>

Christ's descent into hell is painted in similar colours in one of the homilies falsely ascribed to St. Epiphanius.<sup>4</sup> Christ descends to hell to deliver the souls which were there imprisoned. Like a shepherd He goes to seek His lost sheep even in their deepest and darkest recesses. Here He finds Adam, Abel,

<sup>1</sup> EUSEB. EMES. inter opp. EUS. ALEX.—*P.G.* lxxxvi.; col. 403-406.

<sup>2</sup> *Cp.* BATIFFOL, *op. cit.* p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> See the texts in AUGUSTI, *ibid.* col. 411-414. The complete text is to be found in MIGNE, *Dict. des Apocryphes*, i.; col. 1122-1133.

<sup>4</sup> "Spurious homilies belonging to a late period." BATIFFOL, *op. cit.* p. 312, note 1. *Cp.* BARDENHEWER, ii. p. 148.



Abraham and all the patriarchs and prophets, who are all imploring heaven for deliverance. Christ has come to break the tyrant's might (τὸν τῷ κράτει κραταιὸν κατὰ κράτος κρατεῖ τοῦ κράτους κρατοτύραννον). He surrounds Himself therefore with a band of angels that He may descend as a lord, as a warrior, as God; with their help he enters hell in triumph. The angels shout the Psalm *Tollite portas*: Open them not, but beat them down that never may they shut again. The devils know not where to turn. One stands with mouth agape; another hides his face between his knees; another has fallen prostrate, whilst yet another stands rigid, powerless either to act or to flee. The angels pursue the demons into their innermost hiding-places, and then bring them back prisoners, and throw them into irons. In the meantime, Adam has been awakened by the tumult, and, recognising the hour of deliverance, comes to kneel at Christ's feet, who takes him up to heaven, and all other men with him.<sup>1</sup>

In another of these homilies, we are told how the devil mourned his undoing. "I have lost all, Mary's son has deceived me. I took him for a man, and put him to death. Then, thinking my victory assured, I feasted with the Jews. But he rose again, and vanquished me, and now I am without an abode in heaven or on earth."<sup>2</sup>

According to St. Cæsarius of Arles, the devil expressed himself at greater length, and in much finer periods.

On Christ's arrival, the dark night of hell shone with light, weeping ceased, fetters broke and fell. The executioners were dismayed, and on seeing

<sup>1</sup> Ps. EPIPH. *Hom.* ii.—*P.G.* xliii.; col. 451-464.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* *Homil.* v.; col. 482-483.

Christ in their own house the impish crew betook themselves into the corners, where, filled with icy fear, they questioned among themselves :

“Quisnam est iste terribilis et niveo splendore decorus? Numquid noster talem excepit tartarus? numquid in nostram cavernam talem evomuit mundus? Invasor est iste, non debitor; extractor est, non peccator; iudicem videmus, non supplicem; venit iubere, non succumbere; erumpere, non manere. Ubinam putatis ianitores nostri dormierunt, cum iste bellator claustra nostra vexabat? Hic, si reus esset, superbus vel audax non esset. Si eum aliqua delicta fuscarent, nunquam fulgore suo nostras tenebras dissiparet. Sed si Deus est, quid in sepulchro facit? si homo, quid præsumpsit? Si Deus, utquid venit? si homo, quare captivos solvit? Numquidnam iste cum auctore nostro composuit, aut forte ipsum aggressus vicit, et sic nostra regna transivit? Certe mortuus erat. Illusus est praeliator noster in mundo; nescivit quam hic stragem procuraret inferno crux illa fallens gaudia nostra, parturiens damna nostra. Per lignum ditati sumus, per lignum evertimur; perit potestas illa semper populis formidata. Nullus huc vivus intravit, nemo carnifices terruit. Nunquam hoc in loco, fuligine et nigra semper caligine cæcato, iniucundum lumen apparuit. An forte sol de mundo migravit? Sed nec cælum nobis astraque parent, et tamen infernus lucet. Quid agimus? quo modo vertimur? Defendere contra istum non valemus cruentas domus, et obtinere nostri averni custodiam non valemus! Male turbati sumus. Lumen obtenebrare nequivimus, insuper et de nostro interitu formidamus.”<sup>1</sup>

In this wise was the devil vanquished, in the very heyday of his triumph. How he regrets now his hastiness :

“Ille sævissimus draco proprium venenum in necem sui refusum sensit exitii; ac, dum nocere se credit, dum contra Dominum suum cæcus impetum facit, dumque tormenti sui vim illidit in solida, ictu suo percussus, fortem fuisse se doluit, et omnem nocendi potentiam se amississe cognovit, qui noxios virulentorum dentium morsus sano in corpore reliquit.”<sup>2</sup>

These few texts will enable us to appreciate under

<sup>1</sup> CÆSAR. ARELAT. *Hom. I.<sup>a</sup> de Paschate.*—*P.L.* lxvii.; col. 1043.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid. Hom. ii.*; col. 1045.

what dramatic form the Christians were accustomed to depict the defeat of the devil, and the triumph of Christ.

## V

But of all the Fathers, he who is most fearless in giving full vent to his fancy is assuredly St. Gregory the Great. He succeeded in excelling all his predecessors in a matter in which it might be thought that they were not to be surpassed.

When expounding the book of Job, he naturally happened on Behemoth. To his mind the monster could be none other than Satan. Hence all that Job says of this beast is applied by our Doctor to Satan and his works, need it be said with appropriate allegorism, which, however, does not always quite explain his incoherence.<sup>1</sup> This is his account of Behemoth's defeat.

Prior to the Redeemer's coming, the devil had devoured all men (*absorbebit fluvium et non mirabitur*); ever since then he still hopes to pick up a few (*quosdam deglutire se posse confidit*), and he still tries to set snares to trap the unwary. St. Gregory in the name of mankind deplores this state of things :

“Cuius mentis constantia non ab intimis cogitationum radicibus quatiatur, cum hostis noster tantæ esse contra nos fortitudinis demonstratur. Nullumne erit consolationis adiutorium ?”

But let us take courage, for Job says: “*In oculis eius quasi hamo capiet eum.*” As a matter of fact we know that the sinner who is the devil's bait has in him a hidden hook. “*Esca enim provocat ut*

<sup>1</sup> GREGOR. MAGN. *Moral.* lib. xxxii. xii., xxxiii. vi.



*aculeus pungat.*" It was thus that our Saviour acted :

"Dominus itaque noster, ad humani generis redemptionem veniens, velut quemdam de se in necem diaboli hamum fecit. Assumpsit enim corpus, ut in eo Behemoth iste quasi escam suam mortem carnis appeteret. Quam mortem, dum in illo iniuste appetit, nos quos quasi iuste tenebat amisit. In hamo ergo eius Incarnationis captus est, quia, dum in illo appetit escam corporis, transfixus est aculeo divinitatis. Ibi quippe inerat humanitas quæ ad se devorantem duceret, ibi divinitas quæ perforaret; ibi aperta infirmitas quæ provocaret, ibi occulta virtus quæ raptoris faucem transfigeret. In hamo igitur captus est, quia inde interiit unde devoravit." <sup>1</sup>

The fashion in which the devil was caught is all the more remarkable when we bear in mind that he was aware that the Son of God had become flesh, and had done this for our salvation. But as a matter of fact he was still ignorant of the economy of this redemption and of how the Saviour was to overcome him by His death :

"Et quidem Behemoth iste Filium Dei incarnatum noverat, sed redemptionis nostræ ordinem nesciebat. Sciebat enim quod pro redemptione nostra incarnatus Dei Filius fuerat, sed omnino quod idem Redemptor noster illum moriendo transfigeret nesciebat."

Hence he was caught by his very eyes as the prophet expresses it :

"In oculis itaque suis hamo captus est, quia et novit, et momordit." <sup>2</sup>

A few pages farther on we find the same metaphor applied to Leviathan: "*An extrahere poteris Leviathan hamo?*" Just as Behemoth had been, so

<sup>1</sup> GREGOR. MAGN. *Moral.* lib. xxxiii. vi. 12-13.—*P.L.* lxxvi.; col. 677-680. The reader will please note that St. Gregory had already described Behemoth as a bull, xxxii. xiii. 18; col. 646-647.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vii. 14; col. 680.

Leviathan too was to be captured by the Divine hook :

“Leviathan iste hamo captus est, quia in Redemptore nostro, dum per satellites suos escam corporis momordit, divinitatis illum aculeus perforavit. Quasi hamus quippe fauces glutientis tenuit, dum in illo et esca carnis patuit, quam devorator appeteret, et divinitas passionis tempore latuit, quæ necaret.”

Leviathan was a monster floundering about in the deep of human nature and with open jaws ready to engulf his victims :

“In hac quippe aquarum abyssu, id est in hac immensitate generis humani, ad omnium mortem inhians, vitam pæne omnium vorans, huc illucque aperto ore cetus iste ferebatur.”

It was in this ocean that God cleverly fished with His hook :

“Sed ad mortem ceti istius, hamus, in hac aquarum profunditate caliginosa, mira est dispositione suspensus.”

The line to which the hook was fixed was the series of prophets :

“Huius hami linea illa est per Euangelium antiquorum patrum propago memorata . . . Quasi quædam linea torquetur, in cuius extremo incarnatus est Dominus, id est hamus iste ligaretur, quem in his aquis humani generis dependentem aperto ore cetus iste appeteret, sed, eo . . . morso, mordendi vires ulterius non haberet . . . Hamus hic raptoris fauces tenuit et sese mordentem momordit.”

This was God's own plan :

“Ad raptoris mortem incarnatum unigenitum Filium mitto, in quo, dum mortalis caro conspicitur et immortalitatis potentia non videtur, quasi hamus quidam inde devoratore perimit unde acumen potentiæ, quo transfigat, occultat.”<sup>1</sup>

Such is the main subject, but the picture also comprises divers accessories.

“*Et in sudibus perforabit nares eius,*” said the pro-

<sup>1</sup> GREGOR. MAGN. *Moral.* lib. ix. 17 ; col. 682-683.

phet. The devil's nose—*i.e.* the snares which he set as it were to sniff the scent of Christ's Divinity (*odorem divinitatis eius cognoscere concupivit*)—was pierced by the Lord with the awl of the wisdom of His word (*acuta ipsius sapientiæ verba*). The saints and Christians generally are called upon to do the same."<sup>1</sup>

"*Numquid pones circulum naribus eius?*" God Almighty's power is as a ring hanging from the devil's nostrils. "*Aut armilla perforabis maxillam eius?*" In these mystic words St. Gregory perceives God's mercy, which is ever recalling sinners :

"Ineffabili misericordiæ suæ potentia sic malitiæ antiqui hostis obviat, ut aliquando eos etiam quos iam cepit amittat."

The devil holds us in his jaws, how then can we escape save a hole be made in them for us?—

"Quis enim ore illius semel raptus maxillam eius evaderet, si perforata non esset?"

Peter and David too, both having sinned, were in the devil's mouth, they, however, escaped through these holes :

"Cum ad vitam uterque rediit, Leviathan iste eos aliquo modo quasi per maxillæ suæ foramina amisit."

It was the Saviour, thanks be to Him, that made such escape possible :

"Quantum Redemptori debitores sumus . . . qui spem peccatori non abstulit, quia maxillam eius, ut evadendi viam tribueret, perforavit. . . . Si raptus fuerit [peccator], non desperet, quia, si peccatum perfecte lugeat, adhuc foramen in maxilla eius invenit, per quod evadat. Jam dentibus teritur ; sed adhuc, si evadendi via quæritur, in maxilla eius foramen invenitur. . . . Quisquis ergo nondum captus est, maxillam eius fugiat ; quisquis vero iam captus est, in maxilla foramen quærat." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> GREGOR. MAGN. *Moral.* lib. viii. 15-16 ; col. 681-682.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* xi. 21 and xii. 22 ; col. 685-686.



In other passages the devil is metamorphosed into a bird (*per subtilis naturæ levitatem . . . ; quia de naturæ suæ subtilitate extollitur, avis est*). As such it was fitting that he should be caught in a net:

“Ubi contra auctorem suum penna se superbiæ extulit, ibi laqueum suæ mortis invenit. Nam ea eius carnis morte prostratus est quam expetiit elatus; inde pertulit laqueum, unde quasi escam suæ malitiæ mortem iusti concupivit. . . . Quasi avi quippe Dominus illusit, dum ei in passione Unigeniti Filii sui ostendit escam, sed laqueum abscondit. Vidit enim quod ore perciperet, sed non videt quod gutture teneret. . . . Leviathan iste, quasi more avis illusit, divinitatis eius laqueum pertulit, dum humanitatis eius escam momordit.”<sup>1</sup>

The victory will not, however, be completely achieved until the last day, when the devil will be bound once for all and cast into hell:

“Ista bellua crudelis et fortis in medium captiva deducitur et æternis gehennæ incendiis mancipatur.”

We shall then realise fully all his power:

“O quale erit illud spectaculum, quando hæc immanissima bestia electorum oculis ostendetur, quæ hoc belli tempore nimis illos terrere potuerat, si videretur!”

And then we shall also see how thankful we should be to God for having delivered us from him:

“Tunc iusti divino adiutorio quantum debitores sunt plenius recognoscunt, quando tam fortem bestiam viderint quam nunc infirmi vicerunt; et in hostis sui immanitate conspiciunt quantum debeant gratiæ defensoris sui.”<sup>2</sup>

St. Gregory uses all this imagery in other parts of his works. Thus in his commentary on *Kings* we read:

“Quasi hamo serpentem cepit qui ei carnem exhibuit, divinitatem celavit; et dum cepit ille quod appetiit, eo tentus et peremptus est quod non vidit.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> GREGOR. MAGN. *Moral.* lib. xv. 30-31; col. 691-693.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* xx. 37; col. 698.

<sup>3</sup> 1 *Reg.* lib. v. c. i. 4.—*P.L.* lxxix.; col. 316.

We again find the figure of the hook used in one of his homilies :

“ Per Leviathan . . . cetus ille devorator humani generis designatur. . . . Hunc Pater omnipotens hamo cepit, quia ad mortem illius unigenitum Filium incarnatum misit, in quo et caro passibilis videri posset et divinitas impassibilis videri non posset. Cumque in eo serpens iste, per manus persequentium, escam corporis momordit, divinitatis illum aculeus perforavit.”

Then after a few textual quotations from his earlier work, St. Gregory concludes :

“ Et quos iure tenebat mortales perdidit, quia eum in quo ius non habuit morte appetere immortalem præsumpsit.”<sup>1</sup>

He also repeats word for word the figure of the devil's mouth.

This is the passage quoted by M. Sabatier, who translates it as follows :—“ Like a skilful angler God hid the Divine nature of His Son under human flesh that He might catch Satan on the hook of his Divinity. Satan like a greedy fish swallowed the bait and the hook, and thus was fulfilled what had been said by God to Job [xl. 19], ‘ Shalt thou take Leviathan in his eyes as with a hook ? ’ In effect his greediness brought about his ruin. *Like Saturn of old he had to bring up again all those he had devoured.*”<sup>2</sup> From this it will be apparent to the reader that M. Sabatier has not scrupled to embellish the passage with some figures of his own, though he has none the less seen fit to put his paraphrase between the inverted commas which usually denote a quotation. Surely enough in the way of metaphor can be found in St. Gregory's authentic words without its being necessary to forge new ones.

In our little excursion into fancy-land we have

<sup>1</sup> *In Euang. homil.* xxv. 8-9.—*P.L.* lxxvi. ; col. 1194-1195.

<sup>2</sup> SABATIER, *op. cit.* p. 50. Cp. the Latin text, *ibid.* note 2.

culled a certain number of familiar figures forming the heirloom transmitted from Father to Father with but little alteration. The figures used are the same among those who believe in the ransom-theory as among those who preferred the theory of an abuse of rights. Nothing can show better than this, that these images were a poetic vesture, independent of any theory, of which the object was to depict in more brilliant colours the defeat of the devil. Hence, to seek in such figures for any doctrinal meaning would be as foolish as an attempt to erect as dogmas the far-fetched metaphors in which M. Huysmans delights.

But at the same time we do not fear to avow our opinion that descriptions such as those we have just read do not form the most creditable part of the literature left by the Fathers. We must not forget that the Fathers whose works we have just passed in review lived in a period of decay, when bad taste was considered a gift. But after all, bad taste is not a sin, unless of course we are prepared to follow such a Puritan as M. Sabatier in holding that "*in every metaphor there lies either a germ or a relic of mythology.*"<sup>1</sup> How few of us had ever suspected the wickedness that lurked in so seemingly innocuous a figure of rhetoric!

<sup>1</sup> SABATIER, *op. cit.* p. 48, note 1.



## CHAPTER XXIV

THE END OF THE DEVIL'S RIGHTS: ST. ANSELM,  
ABÆLARD, ST. THOMAS

THE theories and the similes of the Fathers concerning the devil's defeat passed over to the Middle Ages together with their ideas of expiation and sacrifice. In mediæval times there existed so many second-rate minds—compilers whose whole thought was centred in the past and mystics whose fancy knew no bounds—that it cannot be a matter of surprise that these same theories and figures were eagerly sought after and welcomed. But the Middle Ages likewise saw the rise of scholasticism and the production of the greatest effort ever made to reduce into something like logical order the data inherited from the Fathers. In the course of this work it was inevitable that theologians should be led to examine the validity of the classical doctrine respecting the devil, and equally inevitable that when once thoroughly examined, the doctrine in question should be dissolved into nothing. Hence, as we shall now have occasion to see, the devil's rights, at first accepted as genuine by everyone, gradually began to be called into question, and, after many vicissitudes, dropped into an oblivion from which they were destined never to return.

### I

The compilers of the Dark Ages were of course incapable of evolving any new theory respecting the devil. They contented themselves with repeating,

with slight glosses of their own, occasionally even word for word, the best-known texts from the Fathers.

St. Isidore of Sevilla adopted from St. Gregory the root-principle of the abuse of rights :

“Ut per hoc amitteret diabolus quos reos tenebat, dum unum interfecit, qui nihil peccati admiserat. Ideoque quos quasi iuste tenuit amisit, quia iniuste Redemptorem occidit.”

He also gleaned, here and there, figures in which to clothe this all too abstract principle. Thus he considers the devil to have been caught in a net like a bird :

“Illusus est diabolus morte Domini quasi avis. Nam ostensa Christus suæ carnis mortalitate, quam interimendam ille appetebat, abscondit divinitatem, ut laqueum quo eum velut avem improvidam prudenti irretiret decipula.”

But above all he is careful to retain the figure of the hook :

“Diabolus, dum in Christo carnem humanitatis impetit, quæ patebat, quasi hamo divinitatis eius captus est, quæ latebat. Est enim in Christo hamus divinitas, esca autem caro, linea genealogia . . . , tenens vero hanc lineam Deus Pater est, de quo Apostolus : Caput Christi Deus. Et Lucas lineam generationis Christi ab imis ad summa contexens inchoat a Joseph et consummat in Deum.”<sup>1</sup>

To exonerate him from the charge of excessive bad taste we may however remark that though he represents sinners as being devoured by the devil and ground by his teeth<sup>2</sup> he nowhere speaks of the hole of penance.

Rhabanus Maurus committed to writing for the edification of posterity a certain number of Ambrosiaster's texts ; for instance that in which he had spoken of the devil's defeat and of his rashness in assailing One stronger than himself,<sup>3</sup> or that in which he speaks

<sup>1</sup> ISID. HISP. *Sent.* lib. i. c. xiv. 12.—*P.L.* lxxxiii. ; col. 567.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* lib. iii. c. v. 30-33 ; col. 665-666.

<sup>3</sup> RABAN. MAUR. *In Rom.* iii.—*P.L.* cxi. ; col. 1343.

of the devil's condemnation for his unjust attack on the guiltless.<sup>1</sup> Also what he had to say respecting God's wisdom, who so well ordered all these things that the devil might, in addition to suffering defeat, be everlastingly tormented by regret for his own imprudence.<sup>2</sup>

Walafrid Strabo in his *Glossa ordinaria* combines the principles of St. Augustine and St. Gregory. He agrees with St. Augustine in considering the devil to have been justly vanquished for having exceeded his rights :

"Superatur iustitia diabolus, non potentia. Iustitia quia immeritum, scilicet Christum, diabolus occidit : unde et alios iure perdit." <sup>3</sup>

He also agrees with St. Gregory in considering this outward victory as the sign of the devil's inward defeat :

"Unde accepit diabolus exterius potestatem dominicæ carnis occidendæ, inde interior quæ nos tenebat potestas eius occisa est." <sup>4</sup>

Scot Eriugena, likewise, gives the devil his place, though he does so in a manner peculiarly his own. The devil, we are told, is vanquished by Christ even on this earth, because he is no longer able to injure believers as he likes. This is the moral chain with which our Saviour bound him when He descended into hell ; a yet sorer deception awaits the devil at the Last Day when he will see escaping his clutches for ever all those men whom he had hoped to drag down with him to everlasting perdition.<sup>5</sup> In another

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vii. ; col. 1410. Cp. Rom. viii. ; col. 1439-1440.

<sup>2</sup> In Eph. v. 2.—P.L. cxii. ; col. 445.

<sup>3</sup> WAL. STRAB. Rom. v. 9.—P.L. cxiv. ; col. 485. Cp. Rom. viii. 4 ; col. 495 and Col. i. 14 ; col. 610.

<sup>4</sup> Col. ii. 15 ; col. 613. Cp. Hebr. ii. 14 ; col. 648 and Ioan. xii. 31 ; col. 403.

<sup>5</sup> IOAN. SCOT. ERIGEN. *De divis. nat.* v. 29.—P.L. cxxii. ; col. 937.



passage Scot describes the devil as doubly tormented, because on the one hand he has been justly despoiled of his kingdom for having unjustly put an Innocent One to death, and on the other because his foes retain the blessed life which he himself has lost.<sup>1</sup> To finish up the writer throws into verse some of his enthusiasm. In spite of the help afforded by the mythic Parcæ and Furies the Demon was overcome, dethroned and put into irons; the gates of his prisons are broken down and his captives take to their heels. In an aside we hear the devil complaining: "I am vanquished, that I can see, I am cast out of my darksome abode. . . . My kingdom is at an end and there is now no room for darkness. I can feel that I am a captive bound withal. Who then is he who attacked me? Who the bold warrior who dare to challenge the prince of the world? Was it he whom Herod mocked and whom Pilate condemned? I must admit that it was all my own doing, and that, in my stupidity, I did not perceive the power beneath His humility. Had I known Him, I should never have crucified Him but I was misled by His human appearance." The devil also gives vent to his dudgeon at seeing men taking his own place in heaven, and finally he decides to take up his abode permanently among the Jews (*Iudaicum pectus, vitiorum plena vorago*), knowing by experience that they are the most likely people to remain friendly to him to the last.<sup>2</sup>

In the tenth century Atto of Vercelli borrows one text from Ambrosiaster to show that the devil in putting the Innocent One to death committed an act of injustice and thus deserved to lose all his goods<sup>3</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> IOAN. SCOT. ERIGEN. *De divis. nat.* v. 38; col. 1007.

<sup>2</sup> *Versus.* Sectio 1<sup>a</sup>, vi.; col. 1229; Sectio. 11<sup>a</sup>, i.; col. 1233-1234.

<sup>3</sup> ATTO VERCEL. *Col.* ii.—*P.G.* cxxxiv.; col. 626.

and one also from Gregory to say that this despoilment of the devil has really taken place and that it was a just punishment for his injustice.<sup>1</sup> He also repeats what St. Augustine says about the wonderful ransom which binds the devil instead of enriching him.<sup>2</sup>

In St. Bruno we find something which, though equally trite, is in appearance slightly less commonplace :

“Summum mysterium hoc est, quare potius homines morte sua redimere voluit (cum eosdem potentiae suae imperio salvare potuerit), quod equidem conveniens fuit, ut, eo scilicet mortali facto, cum a diabolo in morte sua instigante invaderetur, idem diabolus humani generis potestate, quam iure obtinebat, iuste privaretur.”<sup>3</sup>

St. Bruno elsewhere tells us that the devil's right was in reality merely a concession from God, which he moreover lost by his crime.

“*Diabolus ius habebat in omnem hominem propter originale peccatum. De quo quia Christus reus non fuit, in eum diabolus indebitum ius usurpavit. Ideo ius quod concessum ipsi erat in omnes perdidit: et sic, quia inconcessa captavit, iuste concessa perdidit.*”<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, the devil, had he been violently deprived of this right, would have had reason to grumble :

“Cum homo per se servus factus esset, si per alium liberaretur quam per hominem, violentia esset et diabolus iniuriam sibi fieri iuste reclamaret.”

But God chose that the devil should be defeated justly: “*Ut . . . usurpando quod suum non erat, iuste pro hac præsumptione perderet omnem hominem, quem iuste possederat.*”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Hebr.* ix. ; col. 783. *Cp.* 1 *Tim.* ii. ; col. 669.

<sup>2</sup> *Col.* i. ; col. 613.

<sup>3</sup> BRUNO CARTH. *In Psalm* lxiii.—*P.L.* clii. ; col. 933.

<sup>4</sup> *In Rom.* viii.—*P.L.* cliii. ; col. 70.

<sup>5</sup> *Hebr.* ii. ; *ibid.* col. 500-501.

Radulfus Ardens also agrees in stating that God preferred not to give the devil any ground for complaint and that He therefore treated him justly. He also again introduces the long-forgotten simile of the hook, to express both the devil's defeat and God's wisdom :

"Cum Dominus potestative creaturam suam ad se reducere posset, *noluit, ne diabolus conquereretur* se non per iustitiam spoliari sed per potentiam. Placuit igitur ei ut fraudem et iniuriam diaboli non per potentiam, sed potius per sapientiam et iustitiam vinceret. . . . Occultavit igitur hamum divinitatis sub humana carne, . . . quam dum malignus prædo cupit capere, capitur ipse ; et dum in eum, in quem ius non habebat præsumit, etiam illum in quem ius habere videbatur amittit." <sup>1</sup>

Hence in the early Middle Ages such theologians as existed, followed St. Augustine and St. Gregory in adopting the well-known abuse-of-power theory. For a period this doctrine reigned supreme, but it was soon to be submitted to St. Anselm's searching criticism.

Boso, St. Anselm's questioner, begins by exposing the theory, as we have already so frequently seen it put forward :

"Deum scilicet debuisse prius per iustitiam contra diabolum agere, ut liberaret hominem, quam per fortitudinem . . . ; alioquin iniustam violentiam fecisset illi, quoniam iuste possidebat hominem, quem non ipse violenter attraxerat."

He speaks of this as the common opinion (*illud quod dicere solemus*) ; but he himself rejects it.

We might possibly argue thus, he says, were the devil and man their own masters, and did they not both belong to God? But if both are really God's own, then the devil is merely an agitator who persuades his fellow-servant to fly from his master,

<sup>1</sup> RAD. ARD. *Hom.* xxxvi. *de Tempore*.—*P.L.* clv. ; col. 1447-1448. *Cp. Homil.* lxxiii. ; *ibid.* col. 1946.



a traitor who receives the fugitive, a thief who conceals another, and as such he deserves punishment :

“*Quam causam debuit Deus agere cum suo, de suo, in suo, nisi ut servum suum puniret, qui suo conservo communem dominum deserere et ad se persuasisset transire, ac traditor fugitivum, fur furem cum furto domini sui suscepisset? . . . Quid iustius faceret, si hoc Deus faceret ?*”

Moreover, God, who is the Supreme Master, can snatch man from the power of the tyrant and then either punish him by some other means or else forgive him. In this there would be no injustice. No doubt man deserved to be punished and it was fitting that he should receive his punishment at the hand of his seducer. But, strictly speaking, the devil had no right to punish him, the more so as he only did so with fell intent :

“*Diaboli meritum nullum erat ut puniret: immo hoc tanto faciebat iniustius, quanto non ad hoc amore iustitiæ, sed instinctu malitiæ impellebatur.*”

It might also be argued that it was just that man should be left in the devil's power and that God therefore rightly permits it so to be. This is true, but it does not prove that the devil's power is just, at least, not according to the real force of the words, for the devil has no power, save what he receives from God : “*Dicitur iuste vexare hominem, quia Deus hoc iuste permittit et homo hoc iuste patitur.*” Some also base their argument on the “*chirographum decreti*” of which St. Paul speaks. But this account is one with God, not with the devil :

“*Chirographum illud non est diaboli, sed Dei. Iusto namque iudicio Dei decretum erat et quasi chirographo confirmatum, ut homo qui sponte peccaverat, nec peccatum nec pœnam peccati per se vitare posset.*”

Boso lastly requisitions a curiously scholastic

argument—viz. that justice can no more exist in a bad angel than injustice in a good one ; he then concludes :

“Nihil igitur erat in diabolo cur Deus contra illum, ad liberandum hominem, sua uti fortitudine non deberet.”<sup>1</sup>

St. Anselm again deals with the same question in one of his meditations. To begin with, he expresses indignation that some should have ascribed to God the wish of deceiving the devil in planning the Incarnation. He however admits that we may say of God that He allowed the devil to make a mistake. “Why didst Thou, Good Lord, conceal a thing so great beneath something so apparently petty?”—

“An ut falleres diabolum, qui fallendo hominem deiecit de paradiso? Sed utique veritas nullum fallit. An ideo ut ipse diabolus se falleret? Sed utique veritas . . . non intendit ut aliquis se fallat, quamvis hoc dicatur facere cum permittit.”

St. Anselm then goes on to put to himself the great question: Had the devil any rights either over God or over man? He replies that he had none whatever. To the devil all that God owed was punishment; all that man owed was revenge:

“An diabolus habebat iuste aliquid adversus Deum vel adversus hominem? Sed certe *diabolo nec Deus debebat aliquid nisi pœnam, nec homo nisi vicem.*”

Moreover, man owed even his revenge, strictly speaking, to God:

“ . . . Sed et hoc non nisi Deo debebat homo. Nam non peccavit homo adversus diabolum sed adversus Deum; nec homo diaboli erat, sed et homo et diabolus Dei erant. Sed et quod diabolus vexabat hominem, non hoc faciebat zelo iustitiæ, sed nequitiae; nec iubente Deo, sed permittente; non diaboli, sed Dei iustitia exigente.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ANSELM, *Cur Deus Homo*, i. 7.—*P.L.* clviii. ; col. 367-368.

<sup>2</sup> *Med.* xi. ; *ibid.* col. 763-764. From this we see that Homily xvi., which adopts the classical theory of the devil exceeding his rights, must be rejected as spurious. *Cp. ibid.* col. 673-674.

From which we see that St. Anselm was strongly opposed to the prevailing view. This view rested on two correlative principles: that the devil had certain rights over men and that God is in some sort obliged to respect these rights. Anselm, examining these postulates, came to the conclusion that they were unfounded. All that the supposed right of the devil amounts to is a concession or permission on the part of God, hence the latter is in no way bound to respect it; He remains absolute master, with no limit to His freedom. On Anselm's side there was reason and logic, but against him there was arrayed the forces of inveterate habit; hence some time had to elapse before the bogey was finally laid.

## II

It would seem that St. Anselm's criticism exerted no great check on his contemporaries and immediate successors, for we find them as much addicted to the theory of the devil's rights as had been their predecessors.

Godfrey of Vendome, who died in 1132, even seems to revert to the ransom-theory, for he tells us that we were all debtors to Satan:

"Datus est nobis, nostræ utique pretium redemptionis. *Debitores eramus diaboli*, et quia nemo nostrum solvere poterat quod ei debebatur per primi hominis peccatum, in eius carcere tenebamur captivi, duris et diris legibus peccatorum adstricti. Nos autem a peccato liberare nemo valebat, nisi qui solus erat sine peccato Filius Dei."<sup>1</sup>

In the works of Werner, abbot of St. Blasius, a writer of the same period, we find a curious parallel

<sup>1</sup> GOFFR. VINDOC. *Serm. iii. De nativitat. Domini.*—*P.L.* clvii. ; col. 246.



drawn between the rights of God and those of Satan. The passage, which we quote in full, gives the arguments for both sides. God had come to redeem the world, but He finds the devil already in possession. He, as God, has power over all, but, as He said, His kingdom is not of this world :

“Ergo ad aliquid totum Dei erat, et *ad aliquid totum diaboli*. Totum Dei quod ipse fecerat, *totum diaboli quod ipse possidebat.*”

As was to be expected, a conflict followed :

“Ergo *certamen factum est Deo et certamen factum est diabolo.*—Deus dixit se quod suum erat debere recipere ; diabolus dixit se in suo non debere calumniam sustinere.

“—Deus dixit se post tam longam patientiam digne satisfactione honorandum ; diabolus dixit se post tam longam negligentiam sua possessione non privandum.

“—Deus dixit aliena eum fraudulenter abstulisse, violenter tenuisse ; diabolus dixit eum nec cum abstulit contradixisse, nec cum tenuit aliquando repetisse.

“—Deus dixit potenter se ad sua recipienda, si vellet, viribus uti ; diabolus dixit eum contra iustitiam non debere viribus uti.

“—Deus dixit iustum non esse si quod pie creaverat perire permetteret ; diabolus dixit iniustum esse si quod sponte perierat restauraret.

“—Deus dixit se velle misereri per benignitatem propriam ; diabolus dixit se nolle damnum pati per potestatem alienam.

“—Deus dixit iustum esse ut de peccato pœnitentes ad salutem reciperentur ; diabolus dixit iustum non esse ut in peccato persistentes ad salutem cogèrentur.

“—Deus dixit se venisse ut nolentes non cogeret, sed ut volentes adiuvaret ; diabolus dixit interim pro tempore æquanimiter se passurum volentes amittere, si nolentes retineret.

“—Deus dixit in aliena se manum non mittere, si sua redderentur ; diabolus dixit se aliena paratum reddere, si sua non auferrentur.

“—Deus dixit se nullum a misericordia posse repellere ; diabolus dixit, si omnes perderet, non se posse æquanimiter tolerare.

“—Deus dixit se suadere ut in toto ab alieno iure secederet ; diabolus dixit se postulare ut, saltem pro reverentia pristinæ dominationis, aliquam in parte requiem sibi non negaret.”

Finally then, God consents to the world being shared ; but first the conditions are discussed :

“ — Deus dixit se, cum prius potiora elegisset, post illi abiectiora concessurum ; diabolus dixit iure se, dum electionem habere non posset, saltem partitionem facturum.

“ — Deus dixit se, privilegio dominationis, utriusque potestatem vindicare ; diabolus dixit se, quia iam amplius non posset nihil ex iure, sed ex permissione postulare.

“ — Deus dixit se tantum permissurum quod etiam avari famem satiare posset ; diabolus dixit se non tantum accepturum quin amplius cupiat, si fieri possit.”

The earth is then divided, on one side “ *virentia et irrigua in vallibus imis, minora spatio, maiora pretio,*” on the other “ *deserta et arida in rupibus et montibus altis, lata et aspectui patentia, magna spatio, vilia pretio.*”

Then God gives the devil his choice :

“ Ne forte aut violentiam iudicantis aut avaritiam dantis causari valeas, quidquid oculus tuus videt tibi dabo.”

The devil, led by his pride, chooses for himself the heights—that is to say, the rocks and mountains—and the fertile plains thus falling to God's share makes Him to exclaim with the psalmist : “ *Funes ceciderunt mihi in præclaris.*”<sup>1</sup>

The passage we have quoted, though its general appearance and the conclusion at which it arrives are different from anything we have met so far, nevertheless belongs to the school of the believers in the devil's rights. Its singularity, however, well deserves it a separate place, for, of all the variations on the same theme evolved by Christian fancy, that of Werner is undoubtedly the most curious.

With Hildebert of Lavardin, Anselm's friend and correspondent, we return to the views of St. Augus-

<sup>1</sup> WERNER, *Deflorationes SS. Patrum*, lib. ii. (*Dom. xv. post Pent.*). —P.L. clvii. ; col. 1143-1144.

tine and St. Gregory. Hildebert, though he allows that God might have overcome the devil by His power alone, considers that He did not, in fact, adopt this means :

“Magis usus est sapientia et iustitia quam potentia. Qui enim æquissimo iure, virtute poterat diabolum religare et vincere, postposuit quod potuit, ut ageret quod oportuit.”

We can guess the means He adopted :

“Apparuit Christus in quo, cum nihil morte dignum superbus invenerit, eum tamen occidit. Ideoque debitores quos tenebat iuste perdidit.”<sup>1</sup>

In another passage, Hildebert admits that God made use of a trick: “*Dolo vicit, non vi, consilium simulans, non arma promens.*”<sup>2</sup> To describe the devil's defeat he revives the metaphor of the mouse-trap, which had been shelved from the time of St. Augustine :

“*Tendit ei muscipulam et posuit ibi quasi escam sanguinem suum. Ille autem fudit sanguinem innocentem et tunc iussus est recedere a nocentibus.*”<sup>3</sup>

Nor does he forget the simile of the hook :

“Dum escam carnis quam videbat appetiit, transfixus est aculeo divinitatis, quam non prævidit. . . . Dominus . . . diaboli hamum fecit assumendo corpus, in quo ille escam suam mortem carnis appeteret; sed ibi erat divinitas, quæ faciem raptoris perforaret”<sup>4</sup>

The same principles are used by Honorius of Autun, though without the help of the image.

The devil had to be vanquished by a man. But

<sup>1</sup> HILD. CENOM. *Serm.* xxxii.—*P.L.* clxxii.; col. 501-502. *Cp.* *Serm.* xi.; col. 390 and *Serm.* lviii.; col. 625-626.

<sup>2</sup> *Serm.* xcvi.; col. 787.

<sup>3</sup> *Serm.* ix.; col. 384-385.

<sup>4</sup> *Serm.* lxi.; col. 638. *Cp.* *Serm.* vi.; col. 370.



as man was unable to do so, Christ, who was God also, was entrusted with the task.<sup>1</sup> The devil was, of course, overcome by power, but likewise by justice:

“Per quid perdidit diabolus hominem quem quondam possedit? Per iustitiam Dei et potentiam. . . . Offensam iustitiæ Dei graviter in passione incurrit, dum iustum et innocentem hominem occidit. *Ergo per iustitiam expertus est potentiam.* Nam, dum iustus homo iniuste occiditur, iniustus tyrannus iuste opprimitur; et homo deceptus, iniuste oppressus, per iustitiam redimitur.”<sup>2</sup>

Petavius quotes also Yvo of Chartres as an upholder of this doctrine, alleging the following passage<sup>3</sup>:—

“Sic voluit vasis fragilis reformare [naturam], ut nec peccatum hominis relinqueret impunitum, quia iustus est: nec insanabile, quia misericors est. Si iustus tantum esset, . . . potuit sua fortitudine adversus seductorem humani generis contendere et ovem perditam ad gregem reductam suo Domino restituere. Sed hoc modo videretur eminentiam tantum ostendisse virtutis suæ, non medicinalem misericordiam impendisse redemptis.”<sup>4</sup>

But Petavius is in the wrong, and was misled by a resemblance which merely lies on the surface. He should have observed—considering that he quotes the passage at length—that it deals with a matter totally distinct from the devil's rights. Yvo acknowledges that God could have made an end to the devil's power; nor could Satan have complained, but man would have suffered thereby. He would not then have known the extent of God's love and long-suffering, he would not have had His example, nor the graces of the Atonement. In all this lies the

<sup>1</sup> HONOR. AUGUST. *Elucidarium*, i. 16-17.—*P.L.* clxxii.; col. 1121-1122.

<sup>2</sup> *Inevitabile seu de Prædest. dialogus.* *Ibid.* col. 1208.

<sup>3</sup> “Egregie illum eundem suavissimum iustitiæ ac misericordiæ consensum declarat.” *De Inc. Verbi*, ii. v. 10.

<sup>4</sup> YV. CARNUT. *Serm.* vi.—*P.L.* clxii.; col. 562.

"medicinal mercy" which God's bounty hid in the Incarnation :

"Non quod non potuit aliter fieri, quantum ad peritiam et potentiam medici: sed quia non potuit commodius antidotum procurari quantum ad complexionem ægroti."

Hence, according to Yvo, God did not choose to use His justice alone, lest He should deprive us of the effects of His mercy. In other words, his view is the very contrary of the theory of the devil's rights as usually understood.

A little after Yvo's time we again meet the classical doctrine. In a commentary on St. Paul, which was long ascribed to St. Anselm, Herveus, a monk of Bourg-Dieu, puts together several of St. Augustine's principles.

"In hanc redemptionem tanquam pretium pro nobis datus est sanguis Christi, quo accepto diabolus non ditatus est, sed necatus . . . ut quia eos diabolus merito tenebat, quos peccati reos condicione mortis obstrinxerat, hos per eum merito dimitteret quem nullius peccati reum immerita pœna mortis affecit." <sup>1</sup>

In another passage he says distinctly that God wished to be just to the devil :

"Nisi homo esset qui diabolum vinceret, non iuste sed violenter ei tollerentur homines. Ideo mori voluit ut per mortem sui innocentis destrueret principem mortis." <sup>2</sup>

Yet Herveus elsewhere has it that the forgiveness of our sins—obtained through the blood of Christ—was our only ransom :

"Remissis peccatis nostris, amisit ille malignus dominium in nobis ; et ita peccatorum remissio facta est nobis remissio et liberatio." <sup>3</sup>

But what is only casually dealt with by Herveus

<sup>1</sup> HERV. *In Col.* i.—*P.L.* clxxxi. ; col. 1318.

<sup>2</sup> *Hebr.* ii. ; col. 1538.

<sup>3</sup> *Eph.* i. ; *ibid.* col. 1210. *Cp. Tit.* ii. ; col. 1497-1498. *Rom.* iii. ; col. 639.

is systematically enlarged on by Hermann, abbot of St. Martin.

God is doubtless all-powerful and He could by a single fiat snatch man from the devil. But we must bear in mind that His power is subject to His justice: "*Nihil tamen facere potest, aut debet iniuste.*" It is true that the devil seduced man out of unjust jealousy. But at any rate he might complain, and straightway our good abbot puts the following speech into the devil's mouth:—

"It is true, O Lord, that I deceived man through envy. Yet if Thou deprive me of him by force Thou wilt be doing me an injustice (*iniuste me tractabis*). For it was not by violence that I obtained possession of him; force in my case was needless. Thou hadst forbidden him to eat of the fruit; I provoked him to eat it. Thou didst foretell to him that should he eat thereof he would surely die; I assured him that he would not die. He believed me rather than Thee, and, at my bidding, he, of his own free-will, despised Thy commandment. Thus it was not by force that I made him to sin; I merely tempted him. If then Thou makest use of force to ravish him Thou wilt be unjust: '*Iniustum certe erit, si eum mihi violenter abstuleris.*' In such wise would the devil expose his grievance: '*Ita certe posset diabolus Deo obiicere.*'"<sup>1</sup>

In the above not only are we given to understand that the devil has rights, but an attempt is actually made to substantiate them. Yet what follows, if it means anything, means the total suppression of these same rights.

Supposing, says Hermann, that the devil were

<sup>1</sup> HERMANN, *De Incarnat. Dom. Nostri Iesu Christi*.—P.L. clxxx.; col. 15.



seized with remorse—an impossibility, by the way—and consented to withdraw his claim on man (*concedo ut educas eum de inferno*) and should even beseech God to again allow man to return to Paradise, all this kindness would be useless, for man is under no obligations to the devil:

“Homo enim nihil debebat diabolo, vel in manu vel potestate eius consistebat. Contra Deum peccaverat . . . ideoque Deus eum in carcere suo, id est in inferno, posuerat. Iusto tamen iudicio illum ei tortorem tradiderat, cui ipse stulte crediderat. Si Deo aliquo modo reconciliari posset . . . tunc, vellet, nollet diabolus, facile de inferno reduci posset.”

Hence, according to Hermann's later teaching, the devil is merely an executioner and has no other rights, and supposing man to be reconciled to God he is at once delivered from Satan's tyranny. In this we recognise the principles and almost the very words of St. Anselm. We must consequently say that Hermann made use of both doctrines, of the old and the new, placing them side by side, without perceiving how incompatible they really were.

Hence this is the only writer in whose work we find any trace of St. Anselm's criticism. Others, who most certainly were acquainted with the *Cur Deus Homo*, and who borrowed from it the doctrine of Satisfaction, continued, notwithstanding, to defend the devil's rights. A stronger pull was necessary to uproot from the theological field this old theory which was so strongly established through centuries of custom. This pull was to be given by Abælard, whose own notoriety would ensure his strictures a celebrity never acquired by the criticism attempted by the more retiring Anselm.

## III

In the same commentary on *Romans*, in which, as we saw, he slurs over the question of the Atonement, Abælard begins by criticising the then prevalent theory respecting the devil's rights.<sup>1</sup>

He states the theory as follows :—

*“Dicitur quod a potestate diaboli nos redemerit, qui, per transgressionem primi hominis qui se ei sponte obediendo subiecerat, iure quodam omnem quoque eius posteritatem possidebat, ac semper possideret nisi liberator veniret.”*

This statement is rather vague ; but at any rate Abælard replies that the devil had, to begin with, no power over the just, who alone had been redeemed by Christ. Otherwise we should have to admit that the devil tormented the poor man Lazarus equally with the wicked Dives (LUKE xvi. 22). Abælard has no trouble in showing that such a supposition is in contradiction with the text of the parable, and that it makes no account of the “great chaos” (LUKE xvi. 26) which lies between hell and heaven and which the devil cannot cross :

*“Nedum diabolus ibi dominium habeat, ubi nullus iniquus locum vel et transitum habet.”*

If the devil had any right, it was that of punishing us, and this by God's permission :

*“Quod etiam ius in possidendo hominem diabolus habere poterat, nisi forte quia eum, Domino permittente aut etiam tradente, ad torquendum ipsum susceperat ?”*

But it is clear that a master has the right to search for and bring back a fugitive slave. Why then should a special privilege be conferred on the seducer, who, of the two parties, is the more to blame ?—

<sup>1</sup> ABÆLARD, *In Rom.* lib. ii. c. iii.—*P.L.* clxxviii ; col. 833-835.

“Quanto amplius apud dominum suum reus constituatur seductor quam seductus, et quam iniustum sit ut is qui alium seduxerit aliquod inde privilegium vel potestatem in eum quem seduxit habere meruerit.”

Even had he possessed rights, he would have lost them by his treachery, according to the axiom: “*Privilegium meretur amittere qui commissa sibi potestate abutitur.*” If anyone deserved a right, surely it was rather his unfortunate victim:

“Magis ratione consentaneum esset ut is qui seductus est in eum qui sibi seducendo nocuerit distractionem exerceret vindictæ.”

Bearing in mind that, in the present case, the devil has broken his promise, he can have over us no rights other than those of God’s executioner or jailer:

“His rationibus convinci videtur quod diabolus in hominem quem seduxit *nullum ius* seducendo acquisierit, nisi forte, quantum ad permissionem Dei pertinebat qui eum illi *quasi carcerario vel tortori suo* ad puniendum tradiderat.”

Moreover God could have gratuitously forgiven sin, without thereby affording the devil any grievance:

“Si homini transgressori ignoscere Dominus vellet et dicere tortori suo: Nolo ut amplius eum punias, quid iuste conqueri posset tortor, qui nil iuris in torquendo acceperat nisi ex ipsa Domini permissione? Si ergo Dominus hoc permittere cessaret, nullum tortori ius superesset.”

God, who without injury to the devil could unite unto Himself a sinless manhood, could, *a fortiori*, have forgiven men their sins and thereby delivered them from their punishments.

We find like views expressed in the *Epitome*, which, as we have already shown, is probably the work of one of Abælard’s disciples. Here the theory is stated in better and more complete form:

“Quidam dicunt quod a potestate diaboli redempti sumus, qui hominem, decipiendo ipsum, sibi subiecit et potestatem, quam



prius non habuerat, in eum recepit. Ideoque missus est Filius Dei ut, quoniam potestate hominem ei auferre potuerat, magis iustitia et humilitate in eum uteretur. Alioquin inferre ei iniuriam videretur, cum iure hominem, qui se illi mancipaverat, possideret."

It is also refuted more triumphantly :

"Ego vero e contra dico et ratione irrefragabili probo quod diabolus in hominem nullum ius habuerit."

The author adduces two arguments, both of them of a legal character. The first we have met before : "*Qui concessa sibi abutitur potestate, privilegium meretur perdere.*" By robbing God of man by a trick the devil acquired no right over him ; had he any right before, he would thereby have lost it. The author cites, as a proof of his contention, the instance of a steward who leads astray his master's servants. The second argument is drawn from man's nature. He could not put himself in the devil's power, for he was already attached to a master, any more than a slave has a right to free himself and put himself under the authority of whom he chooses :

"Quamquam aliquis servus a domino suo fugiat, non tamen alteri se iure pro servo tradere potest. Igitur cum servus emancipationem sui facere non possit, homo autem emancipationem istam fecerit, constat hominem sub potestate diaboli non fuisse, nec de eius servitute redemptum esse."

From all this he infers that the object of the Incarnation was not to redeem man from the devil :

"Venit ergo Filius Dei non ut hominem de potestate diaboli redimeret, cum nec ipse diabolus pretium aliquod inde reciperet, immo hominem nunquam reconciliatum Deo vellet."<sup>1</sup>

In this conclusion there lies an, at least verbal, ambiguity which we shall have to point out ; but, roughly speaking, this downright criticism of the devil's rights was quite justified. The reader will also

<sup>1</sup> *Epitome theol. Christianæ*, c. xxiii. ; *ibid.* col. 1730-1731.

perceive that, their liveliness apart, both the argument and the conclusion are those of St. Anselm.<sup>1</sup> But this time the criticism was couched in too popular language for it to pass unperceived.

William of St. Thierry was the first to call attention to Abælard's errors and to commit to writing a refutation which was afterwards to serve St. Bernard both as a model and as a framework for his own. In this refutation much room is given to the question of the devil's rights.<sup>2</sup> Abælard's opinion is thus described by William :

"Sciendum est quod doctores nostri post Apostolos in hoc conveniunt quod diabolus dominium ac potestatem habebat super hominem et iure eum possidebat. . . . Sed, ut nobis videtur, nec diabolus unquam in homine habuit ius aliquod, nisi forte, Deo permittente, sicut carcerarius : nec Filius Dei ut hominem liberaret carnem assumpsit."

This is undoubtedly Abælard's doctrine, but its words do not tally with anything now remaining of Abælard's works. As the same text is quoted by St. Bernard, and as its tone agrees with what we know of Abælard's presumptuousness, we should not be justified in accusing our two authors of having misrepresented their opponent's text. No doubt it really formed a part of his *Introductio ad Theologiam* which is now lost, but to which Abælard himself refers us for a full exposal of his views.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hence we can only wonder at the attitude of certain theologians. For instance PETAVIUS, who deals so harshly with Abælard, says never a word of St. Anselm (*De Inc. Verbi*, ii. v. 11-12), whilst to THOMASSINUS what is a mere indiscretion in St. Anselm (*audacius*) is impudence in Abælard (*procaciter, verba effrænata impudentiam præseferentia*). *De Inc. Verbi*, i. iii. 6-8.

<sup>2</sup> GULLIELM. A. S. THEOD. *Disputatio adv. Abæl.* c. vii.—*P. L.* clxxx.; col. 269-274.

<sup>3</sup> *Cp.* VACANDARD, *Vie de saint Bernard* (Paris, 1895), ii. p. 131, note 2.

However this may be, William is indignant with Abælard's vindication of the right of private judgment :

" Ut nobis, inquit, videtur. Melius ergo ipse aliquid asseret nobis quam in quo omnes doctores post Apostolos convenerunt et consentiunt? Meliusne aliquid ei revelatum est vel ipse per se adinvenit, quam quod nos docuerunt qui a Domino didicerunt? Num ei sapientia profundior? num sensus acutior? num vita sanctor? num auctoritas gravior? Nobis, ait, non videtur. Quid si ipsi sapientiæ Dei visum est, si apostolo Paulo et ceteris Apostolis hoc visum est?"

Our author then proceeds to establish to his own satisfaction the doctrine of the devil's rights. For his argument the good abbot relies on a text of St. Augustine's: "*Potestatem in mundo diabolum nimiam habuisse ante adventum Christi, in passione eius amittendam*"; and on the testimony given by Christ Himself in the well-known texts JOHN xii. 31 and xiv. 30. Had the devil no power over the world, Christ would not speak of casting him out, nor would the devil have done anything against Him had he had no power over other men.

The devil's power dates from Adam's fall :

" Potestas hæc diaboli in homine ab illo cæpit, quem primo decepit; non quod Deus diabolo in homine dederit potestatem, sed mox, cum peccantem Deus iuste deseruit hominem, seductor invasit peccatorem."

The explanation of the origin of Satan's power is curious and novel. We are also told that it was unjustly acquired, and that God merely tolerates it :

" Sicque potestas a diabolo est in hominem non iure acquisita, sed nequiter præsumpta et a Deo iuste permissa, qua homo servus eius factus est a quo superatus est."

The nature of this authority is merely moral and our bondage is naught else than the state of sin :



"*Illaqueatus laqueis diaboli, captivatus est ab eo [homo] ad eius voluntatem [2 Tim. ii. 26], subaudis : faciendam. . . . Cum enim æque omnes persequatur, ipsi soli sub potestate eius sunt, qui secundum voluntatem eius vivunt. Servitus autem hæc servitus est concupiscentiarum, qua vivit homo secundum voluntatem seductoris, cui nemo valet resistere nisi in regno gratiæ.*"

Before the coming of Christ this authority extended over all men :

"Huic potestati totus pæne mundus erat obnoxius, cum servirent ei omnes iniusti."

Even the just were, to some extent, under it, for they too were subject to original sin, and thus, for the time being, were not allowed to enter heaven.

William has but little to say of the manner in which their deliverance was effected. But he will have nothing to do with the ransom-theory, and hints that we are delivered by the very fact of being justified :

"Nec, sicut queritur Petrus, sacer ille sanguis diabolo quasi in pretium redemptionis pro homine datur ; sed appetenti malitiæ est permissus, ut, cum in gaudium eius funderetur, per iustificationem eius innumera multitudo prædestinatorum ei tolleretur."

From this we gather that William considered the devil's power as a kind of moral sovereignty—an unjust one to boot—which he exercises over men through sin ; thus he believes that he has sufficiently confuted Abælard by having proved that man is under the tyranny of concupiscence and sin. Hence it is apparent that William himself was far from upholding the traditional view in its entirety, and that, on the contrary, in his estimation, the devil's power stood for little more than a mere formula.

But Abælard's greatest opponent was St Bernard.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> BERNARD, *Epist. de erroribus Abælardi*, v. 11-14.—*P.L.* clxxxii. ; col. 1062-1064.

In his work we find repeated the same ideas which we have just met in that of William of St. Thierry. After having quoted the same opening passage from Abælard's work, Bernard likewise gives vent to his indignation :

"Ecclesiasticorum doctorum unam omnium de hac re dicit esse sententiam, et ipsam ponit et spernit, et gloriatur se habere meliorem."

Something stronger than words is what is required :

"An non iustius os loquens talia fustibus tunderetur quam rationibus refelleretur? Nonne omnium merito in se provocat manus cuius manus contra omnes? Omnes, inquit, sic : sed non ego sic. Quid ergo tu? quid melius affers? quid subtilius invenis? quid secretius tibi revelatum iactas, quod tot præterierit sanctos, effugerit sapientes?"

However, in default of these stronger arguments, he consents to use reason, and therefore turns to tradition for a defence of the devil's rights :

"Tu de tuo nobis tradis et quod a nemine accepisti. . . . Ego Prophetas et Apostolos audio, obedio Euangelio : sed non Euangelio secundum Petrum [Abælardum]."

But as, maybe, Abælard will not accept tradition, his adversary appeals to Scripture, which certainly speaks of our Salvation as a deliverance :

"Salvabo te et liberabo te, noli timere [Soph. iii. 16-17]. Quæris a qua potestate? Non enim vis ut diabolus in hominem habeat vel habuerit potestatem; fateor, nec ego. Non tamen ideo non habet, quia ego et tu hoc nolumus."

He also adduces the testimony of those of whom Scripture tells us, that they have been redeemed by God from the hands of the enemy (*Ps.* cv. 10) :

"Qui redempti sunt a Domino *de manu inimici*. Quod minime negares et tu, si non esses sub manu inimici."

And he compares this with that other text : "*Ut filios Dei, qui erant dispersi, congregaret in unum*"

(IOAN. xi. 52). Who else can this powerful enemy be save the devil?—

“Erant non solum dispersi, sed et captivi. Redemit et congregavit: redemit autem de manu inimici. Non dicit ‘inimicorum,’ sed: ‘inimici.’ Inimicus unus, regiones multæ. . . . Quis iste unus tam potens dominus, qui non uni, præfuit regioni, sed omnibus? Non alius, ut arbitror, quam ille qui ab alio Propheta dicitur absorbere fluvium, id est genus humanum, et non mirari.”

St. Bernard then appeals to St. Paul:

“Paulus est iste qui *homines a diabolo captivos teneri asserit ad eius voluntatem* [2 Tim. ii. 26]. Audis: ‘Ad eius voluntatem,’ et negas potestatem?”

And as if Paul’s authority were not sufficient, there is given also that of Christ Himself:

“Si et Paulo non credis, veni iam ad ipsum Dominum, si forte audias et quiescas.”

We are therefore reminded of the passages in which the devil is called the prince of the world, the strong man armed, etc. Our Lord acknowledged that this power extended in some sort over His own self when He said to His enemies: “This is your hour and the power of darkness” (LUKE xxii. 53).

St. Bernard now explains how the devil’s power is just—having been conferred on him by God—even though his will is evil:

“Nec iniustam puto iste causabitur potestatem datam desuper. Discat ergo *diabolum non solum potestatem, sed et iustam habuisse in homines*. . . . Ceterum etsi iustam dicimus diaboli potestatem, non tamen et voluntatem. Unde non diabolus qui invasit, non homo qui meruit: sed iustus Dominus qui exposuit.”

But, this notwithstanding, in itself this power is unjust:

“Hoc ergo diaboli *quoddam in hominem ius, etsi non iure acquisitum sed nequiter usurpatum, iuste tamen permissum*. Sic itaque homo iuste captivus tenebatur ut tamen nec in homine, nec in diabolo illa esset iustitia, sed in Deo.”



We may complete St. Bernard's doctrine by examining the answers he gives to the objections of his clever opponent.<sup>1</sup>

Abælard asks how the elect could be in the power of the devil? St. Bernard answers that they would have been in his power were it not for the Redeemer:

"Ut Dei propositum impleretur, opus fuit liberatore. Oportuit autem liberari in hoc sæculo ut liberos haberent in futuro."

The just of the old Law were likewise delivered by their faith in the coming Redeemer:

"Sic de omnibus electis illius temporis sentiendum natos quidem et ipsos, æque ut nos, sub potestate tenebrarum propter originale peccatum; sed erutos antequam morerentur, et nonnisi in sanguine Christi."

As to the devil holding his power merely by God's sufferance, and as to God being in no wise bound to respect it, this much Bernard concedes to his adversary as something quite evident:

"[Docet Abælardus] diabolum nullum sibi ius in hominem vindicare potuisse aut debuisse nisi permissu Dei; et quod sine iniuria diaboli Deus profugum suum, si vellet misereri, repetere et solo verbo eripere posset, *quasi hoc quis diffiteatur.*"

The reader knows, however, how little truth there is in the insinuation made in St. Bernard's concluding words. We have already seen that even in his time there were theologians such as Hermann—who moreover were, in this, the direct heirs of several of the Fathers—who expressly state the contrary. And with regard to the other writers, by their very insistence in opposing God's justice to His mercy, they showed that their views were anything but those of St. Bernard. But it is useless to find fault with Bernard's knowledge of history, our only concern

is with his own admissions. It has now been settled that the devil has, over men, no right strictly so-called which he can oppose to the course of God's mercy. To prove this was the main object of both Anselm's and Abælard's polemics. We have already seen that their criticism was well founded and here we witness its triumph.

But does not this admission involve the destruction of the whole politico-juridical edifice which the Fathers and previous theologians had erected on the principle? Evidently St. Bernard thinks that it involves nothing of the sort:

"Iuste igitur homo addictus, sed misericorditer liberatus: sic tamen misericorditer *ut non defuerit iustitia quædam et in liberatione*, . . . *ut (quod congruebat remediis liberandi) iustitia magis contra invasorem quam potentia uteretur.*"

And he goes on to give the traditional explanation:

"Venit princeps huius mundi, et in Salvatore non invenit quidquam; et cum nihilominus innocenti manus iniecit, iustissime quos tenebat amisit: quando is qui morti nihil debebat, accepta mortis iniuria, iure illum qui obnoxius erat et mortis debito et diaboli solvit dominio."<sup>1</sup>

In one of his sermons we find the same doctrine touched upon:

"Consilio et fortitudine de manu adversarii [nos] liberavit. Consilio siquidem pristino iure privavit hostem, data potestate ut manus iniiceret innocenti; fortitudine prævaluit ne violenter posset retinere redemptos."<sup>2</sup>

In another sermon he even states that our Saviour made use of a trick to seduce the seducer:

"Seductorem universitatis serpentem *arte utique sanctiore delusit*; iunxit affectioni sapientiam *qua tyrannum deciperet.*"<sup>3</sup>

Ritschl states of St. Bernard that, "agreeably with

<sup>1</sup> BERNARD, *Epist. de erroribus Abælardi*, vi. 15; col. 1065.

<sup>2</sup> *In Annunt. B. M. V. Sermo. ii. 3.*—*P.L.* clxxxiii.; col. 391.

<sup>3</sup> *In cantic cant. Sermo. xx. 3*; *ibid.* col. 868.

all the Fathers, he upholds the idea of a contract with the devil.”<sup>1</sup> We have already drawn attention to this strange simplification of history, of which the injustice is lessened, though not altogether excused, by the unconsciousness of its perpetrator. But though St. Bernard never adopted so gross an opinion, he did adopt and make his own the abuse-of-rights theory. But we may question whether even this theory was compatible with the principles he lays down. Admitting that the devil's rights over us depend on God's permission, it is certainly not necessary for God to heed them; this much is clear, and St. Bernard himself takes good care not to deny it. But can we even say that it is fitting that God should take these rights into account? Many Fathers had asserted that it was, but how can such an assertion be substantiated except by allowing to the devil certain real rights which as we have seen cannot be allowed him? Hence St. Bernard's position appears to us wrong, for he admits a theory the principle of which he has suppressed; it is as if we wished to preserve a house after having destroyed the foundations. St. Anselm and Abælard, both of them, acted much more logically in fearlessly casting out of theology a decaying doctrine which was now superfluous if not actually dangerous.

We have digressed a little to show how far St. Bernard agrees with his opponent and exactly how much further he should have gone to render his position tenable. But as, at the present day, we are inclined to consider perhaps too exclusively St. Bernard's limitations, it will be well to seek whether his attack on Abælard, being thus based on a false

<sup>1</sup> RITSCHL, *op. cit.* i. p. 52. This does not however prevent him from giving a fairly accurate account of St. Bernard's true doctrine.



assumption, was therefore unjust. Hence we must return to St. Bernard's main thesis to find its exact purport.

His grievance against Abælard is that he will not allow the devil any power—the reader will please underline this word “power” for it is all-important—over man; it is the existence of this power that St. Bernard seeks to establish. Now it is evident that by the devil's power he means that power which he exercises over sinners—*i.e.* over all men—a power which is both absolute and discretionary, and which is moreover just, because it is allowed by God and deserved by man, and was only broken by Christ's advent. If his allegorical renderings of Scripture prove anything they only prove this. Just as William of St. Thierry before him, so St. Bernard refutes Abælard by establishing Satan's moral sovereignty over man through sin.

Undoubtedly there can be no question about the existence of this power, but did Abælard deny it? We must admit that a cursory examination of his opinion would not lead us to suppose that he did. Nevertheless, when we come to consider it more closely, we notice that in his exposal, in his arguments, and in his conclusions, he frequently uses the term “*potestas*” where Anselm prefers the word “*ius*.” In this there is more than a merely verbal difference; in this there lies an ambiguity, which not only detracts from the clearness of Abælard's doctrine, but even casts doubt on the very existence of a power of which St. Anselm merely questioned the legal character. Anselm questioned the right, Abælard seems to deny the fact. Now the sovereignty of the devil being then the figurative rendering of the state of sin, to deny it was to destroy the whole economy of the

Atonement. So far as we can gather at this distance of time, this was not Abælard's intention; but it is clear that in his choice of words he did not sufficiently guard himself against the possibility of such an accusation. We must also remember that we no longer possess his complete theology, in which we could examine his doctrine in its entirety, and in all its implications. Above all, his thought, both in his own lectures and in those of his disciples, was in constant reception of a commentary—of which we have one instance in the *Epitome*—which revealed to his contemporaries both its real import and its peril.

Hence the matter at stake was the moral kingdom, which, by permission of God's justice, the devil had acquired over sinful man, and, for some reason or other, Abælard was suspected of denying it. It is important that we should understand this, for it was thus that both William of St. Thierry and St. Bernard understood Abælard, and refuted him; it was on this account also that the Church condemned him: "*Christus non assumpsit carnem ut nos a iugo diaboli liberaret*,"<sup>1</sup> and this was the opinion which he also retracted in the following clause:—

"*Solum Filium Dei incarnatum profiteor, ut nos a servitute peccati et a iugo diaboli liberaret.*"<sup>2</sup>

As a consequence, at the end of the controversy—that is, if we have understood its trend rightly<sup>3</sup>—the result gained amounted to this: The devil had secured a kingdom over mankind which only the coming of Christ could destroy; but this power,

<sup>1</sup> The 4th of Abælard's condemned propositions. DENZINGER, No. 313. *Cp. Conc. Flor. ibid.* No. 602.

<sup>2</sup> ABÆLARD, *Retractatio*. *P.L.* clxxviii.; col. 105-106.

<sup>3</sup> This interpretation is not peculiar to ourselves. *Cp. GIETL, op. cit.* p. 161.

although justly tolerated by God, conferred on the devil no right. Abælard, in his eagerness to prove the second point, went so far as to deny the first; on the other hand St. Bernard considered the second point so manifest that he does not even deign to argue it, but straightway proceeds to vindicate the first. Abælard had overshot the mark, and that is why his effort called forth refutations; but, in fine, whatever truth there was in his doctrine held the field. St. Bernard rightly opposed his rashness and his excesses, but he also was forced to yield to some extent, and possibly to a greater extent than he was willing to admit. Thus it came about that whilst Bernard was perhaps even not aware of having fallen back before his adversary, he, the valiant defender of the devil's rights, none the less contributed to establish the theological army on the ground chosen by St. Anselm, though, through force of habit, he continued to retain a rear-guard on the old positions which posterity will be less anxious to preserve.

#### IV

But no retreat can take place without some disorder. The right manner of harmonising traditional data with recent criticism, a thing which, judged from our distant standpoint, seems relatively simple, seemed less simple to the contemporaries of the change. On one side Abælard's disciples, willing as they were to repudiate their master's condemned views, were also too well acquainted with the good points of his doctrine to surrender unconditionally. On the other side the traditionalists felt themselves obliged not to take full advantage of their victory but to make some concessions to the vanquished. Hence we



must not be surprised to find, even long after, much indecision on either side.

Among Abælard's friends, the compiler of the *Summa Sententiarum* merely states in the passage we have already quoted :

"Ad hoc venit in mundum ut damnaret diabolum et hominem liberaret." <sup>1</sup>

Roland Bandinelli for his part continues his master's warfare against the still prevailing opinion, which he describes as follows :—

"Potuit solo verbo [redimere hominem]; sed non erat conveniens, ne diabolus de iniuria sibi illata conquereretur."

He himself will not admit that the devil could have had any grievance, seeing that he had no rights :

"Non videtur quod iniuria ullo modo sibi illata fuisset, . . . præsertim cum nihil iuris in homine haberet."

This he proves by means of Abælard's arguments and examples. It is, however, objected that St. Augustine speaks of some right or other possessed by the devil: "*Iure diaboli destructo, . . . de iure perdidit quod iuste possidebat.*" To this our author replies by very rightly distinguishing between right and possession :

"Ius non ponitur ibi in propria significatione, sed accipitur pro dominio. . . . Iuste non refertur ad possessorem, id est diabolum, sed ad rem possessam, scilicet hominem; et iuste eramus sub eius potestate, id est: merita nostra hoc exigebant." <sup>2</sup>

Robert Pullus deals with the question both with more precision, and more vigorously :

<sup>1</sup> Inter opp. HUG. A. S. VICT. *Sum. sent.* i. 15.—*P.L.* clxxvi.; col. 70.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Sentenzen Roland's* (Gietl's ed.), pp. 158-162. The editor quotes in the notes the parallel passages from OMNEBENE, but the distinctions are Roland's own.

“*Diabolus in homine, quem malo dolo deceperat, nihil iuris habebat, tanquam alienum in servum invasionem faciens merito spoliandus, immo etiam ex invasione iudicandus. Ac per hoc nihil erat necesse fieri quam ius, quod sibi in homine nullum erat, (Deo tamen permittente hominem opprimi, quoniam credidit oppressori) rationabiliter amitteret. Quanquam Dominum tertio tentare ausus, merito potestate usurpata videatur privatus.*”

A little farther on he still more indignantly rejects the ransom-theory :

“Redemptor ergo, pretium dans pro captivis . . . cui hanc oblationem fecit? Num ei qui illos abduxit captivos atque in captivitate detinuit? Pretium namque redemptionis cui offerendum est? nonne ei qui redimendos in captivitate tenet? Sed *omnino absit nefarium illud nefas, quod Salvator proditori diabolo se inclinans pretiosam (quod utique idololatria foret) obtulerit mortem.*”

On the contrary the devil would have taken good care not to accept such a gift. Had he known Christ he would never have crucified Him. This is seen from the fact that, as soon as he recognised Him, he endeavoured to prevent Pilate through the intervention of his wife. But it was impossible to allay the anger of the Jews, which had been provoked by the devil himself, however much he might strive to do so.<sup>1</sup>

The above shows us that scholasticism had not altogether dried up the fancy of Robert Pullus. Nor was his attack on the ransom-theory altogether untimely, for soon after we find the same theory revived by the mystic, Peter Cellensis, bishop of Chartres.

This pious writer divides the blood of the redemption into three portions: that of the Father, that of men and that of the devil :

“In sanguine vero intravit, quia per passionem potum, immo pretium nostræ redemptionis, paternis labiis, assistantibus ange-

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<sup>1</sup> ROBERT PULL. *Sent.* lib. iv., xiii., xiv.—*P.L.* clxxxvi.; col. 820-821.

licis spiritibus, ministravit. . . . Sanguinis partem nihilominus ad bibendum, in crateris sacramentalibus, amicis et imitatoribus suis reposuit usque ad consummationem sæculi; partem iterum non [f. in] pretium nostræ redemptionis tam Patri quam creditori *hosti pie et iuste solvit.*"<sup>1</sup>

In another passage he describes the tragic contest between Christ and Satan and the latter's defeat:

"Absorpta est mors in victoria; et quidquid rivulus infernalis conglomerare potuit ut nos cum Iesu deleteret, totum sine damno immo cum lucro nostræ restaurationis, Iesus absorbit. . . . Nam Iesus plus potuit absorbere quam diabolus vomere. Sapientia siquidem vincit malitiam."<sup>2</sup>

Now that he has safely entered this way we must not be surprised to find him repeating the old metaphors:

"Fines hostilium castrorum penetrans, prædam excussit de manu et ore prædonis, prædonem vinculis igneis adstringens et laqueo antiquæ fraudis illum strangulans, cum in hamo divinitatis appetibilem carnis suæ escam proponeret, et *sancta fraude artem malignitatis deciperet.*"<sup>3</sup>

Fortunately the defence of tradition was not left to Peter; others there were better able to reconcile it with progress. Of these the best known is Hugo of St. Victor. He, too, teaches that it was good, in order to humble the devil, that he should be overcome by prudence rather than by force:

"Venit sapientia ut *hostis ratione vinceretur*, et ut habitaculum suum ipsa vindicaret, quod malitia possidebat. Qui enim astutia vicerat iustum fuit ut non fortitudine sed prudentia vinceretur, ut in eodem in quo se victor erexerat victus sterneretur."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PETR. CELL. *Liber de Panibus*, 1.—*P.L.* ccii.; col. 929. *Cp. Sermo* xlii.; *ibid.* col. 772. THOMASSINUS is not unnaturally astonished to find such a doctrine in so pious an author (*nulli pietate secundus*), *De Inc.* i. iii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Serm.* xxxv.; col. 744.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* xlii.; col. 771.

<sup>4</sup> HUG. A. S. VICT. *De Sacram.* lib. ii. pars. i.<sup>a</sup> 2.—*P.L.* clxxvi.; col. 372.



But he will not allow that the devil possesses any rights over us, for when he made man to sin, he evidently committed an act of injustice against God<sup>1</sup>:

*“Diabolus iniuriam Deo fecisse convincitur, quia servum eius hominem et fraudulenter abduxit et violenter tenuit.”*

And likewise another against the man whom he deceived :

*“Item diabolus homini iniuriam fecisse convincitur, quia illum et prius bona promittendo decepit et post mala inferendo nocuit.”*

But man too was guilty in God's regard :

*“Quia et præceptum eius contempsit et se sub manum alienam ponens, suæ servitutis damnum illi intulit.”*

Hence he is justly held a prisoner, even though the devil has no right over him :

*“Iniuste ergo diabolus tenet hominem, sed homo iuste tenetur; quia diabolus nunquam meruit ut hominem sibi subiectum premeret, sed homo meruit per culpam suam ut ab eo premi permitteretur. . . . Iuste ergo subiectus est homo diabolo quantum pertinet ad culpam suam: iniuste autem quantum pertinet ad diaboli fraudulentiam.”*

Under these circumstances, all that is needed is an advocate who shall be able to convince the devil of his malice :

*“Si igitur homo talem patronum haberet cuius potentia diabolus in causam adduci posset, iuste dominio eius homo contradiceret, quia nullam diabolus iustam causam habuit quare sibi ius in homine vindicare debuerit.”*

But God only can perform the office of such an advocate, and He is justly wroth with man :

*“Patronus autem nullus talis inveniri poterat nisi solus Deus; sed Deus causam hominis suscipere noluit, quia homini adhuc pro culpa sua iratus fuit. Oportuit igitur ut homo Deum placaret, et sic deinde, Deo patrocinate cum diabolo causam iniret.”*

Hugo at least realised that the main part of the

<sup>1</sup> HUG. A. S. VICT. *De Sacram.* lib. i. pars. viii.<sup>a</sup> 4; col. 307-308  
*Cp. De sacram. legis nat. et scriptæ, ibid.* col. 29.

Atonement was something between God and man, and this it is which gives his opinion, in spite of its childishness, an appearance of progressiveness.<sup>1</sup>

Peter Lombard unites—not without some embarrassment—the echoes of these varied voices. He begins by laying down, in carefully chosen words, the principle that we are delivered from the devil by the very fact of our sins being forgiven. This, it will be recollected, was the good point in Abælard's teaching:

“A diabolo et a peccato per Christi mortem liberati sumus, quia in sanguine ipsius iustificati sumus; et in eo quod sumus iustificati, id est a peccato soluti, a diabolo sumus liberati, qui nos vinculis peccatorum tenebat.”

Through His love, Christ took possession of our souls which had been the devil's abode, and it was there that He bound the Strong Man. The devil can still tempt us, but he can no longer seduce us: “*Ut tentationem, quæ ei adhuc permittitur non sequatur seductio.*” The Lombard then illustrates the devil's defeat by nothing less than the old image of the mouse-trap suggested by St. Augustine:

“Nihil invenit diabolus in Christo ut moreretur. . . . Venit Redemptor et victus est deceptor. . . . Tetendit ei muscipulam crucem suam, posuit ibi escam sanguinem suum.”

He also follows St. Augustine in stating that our Saviour had to become man that the devil might not be despoiled by force:

“Factus est ergo homo mortalis ut moriendo diabolum vinceret. Nisi enim homo esset qui diabolum vinceret, non iuste, sed violenter homo ei tolli videretur, qui se illi sponte subiecit.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We cannot therefore understand how M. Lichtenberger could write that “Hugo of S. Victor reverts unconditionally to the idea of a *legal purchase* from the devil.” *Op. cit.* p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> PET. LOMB. *Sent.* iii. Dist. xix. 1 and 2.—*P.L.* cxcii.; col. 795-796. The texts of St. Augustine are borrowed from the *Glossa ad Lyranum*. Cp. BONAVENT. (Quaracchi's ed.), iii. p. 396-397, notes.

No doubt God could have redeemed us by other means, but if He chose this one it was because none was more fitting. Among other reasons—" *quia sic iustitia superatur diabolus, non potentia.*" Conformably with tradition this is also the reason on which the Lombard lays most stress, though he candidly admits that he does not quite understand it: "*Et quo modo id factum sit, explicabo ut potero.*" To this end, he adduces St. Augustine's text (*De Trinitate*), from which it appears that we were in the devil's power without either the devil or man ceasing to be under God's supreme authority; that God willed to deliver us from the nether power by justice rather than by power, ordering matters in this wise that He might rebuke the fashion of acting usually adopted both by the devil and by man. Justice was fulfilled by the devil putting to death the guiltless one on whom he had no claim. And as the Lombard in a happy sentence, which is not to be found in St. Augustine, expresses it:

"*Iustitia ergo humilitatis hominem liberavit, quem sola potentia æquissime liberare potuisset.*"

Then, with scarcely anything by way of transition, Peter Lombard mentions the intermediate view of Hugo of St. Victor. The devil had acted unjustly towards both God and man; hence he has no claim. But as man also has been guilty in the sight of God he deserved to fall under the devil's yoke. The Lombard therefore concludes:

"*Iniuste igitur diabolus, quantum ad se, hominem tenebat; sed homo iuste tenebatur.*"

Hence God might have justly used His power, but He forbore for the pædagogic reason given above by St. Augustine:



“Deus sola iussionis virtute hominem potuit rectissime liberare ; sed ob causam præmissam *iustitia humilitatis* uti voluit, qui, dum in carne mortali crucifixus est, iustificati sumus, *id est per remissionem peccatorum de potestate diaboli eruti* : et ita a Christo iustitia victus est diabolus, non potentia.”<sup>1</sup>

But what else is this “justice of humility,” which is so happily described by the Lombard, than the example and the salutary expiation of Christ’s Passion? This “justice” is merely a moral justice, and the problem of our deliverance from the devil, which is connected with the object of the Incarnation, is solved at once. We have now left far behind St. Augustine, who wished to retain, side by side with this moral idea of justice, the strictly legal notion that the devil had been stripped of his rights for having transgressed them. The “Master of the Sentences” reads and understands St. Augustine in the light of the principles laid down by Abælard and Hugo of St. Victor. It was by attaching himself to the most enlightened of the Fathers and by discreetly correcting his utterances in the light of more recent criticism, that the Lombard succeeded in restating in a manner to which no exception could be taken the ancient doctrine of the devil’s rights. There remained, however, a good deal of confusion in his teaching which later the schoolmen would be called upon to dispel.

## V

To St. Thomas it was reserved to tell us plainly what were the devil’s rights over man. The sinner had offended God ; God in return allowed him to fall under the bondage of Satan :

“A Dei servitute recedens diaboli servitutem incurrerat, *Deo iuste hoc permittente propter offensam in se commissam.*”

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<sup>1</sup> PET. LOMB. *Sent.* iii. Dist. xx. 1-2 ; col. 798-799.

It is clear that this bondage is merely moral, and is, in fact, nothing else than the bondage of sin. With respect to the penalty the devil played the part of God's hangman :

"*Quantum ad pœnam principaliter homo erat Deo obligatus, sicut summo judici, diabolo autem tanquam tortori.*"

Hence the devil is perfectly unjust, nor has he any rights over man, save by God's permission, a fact which is happily stated by Aquinas : "*Deo permitte hoc quantum ad culpam et ordinante quantum ad pœnam.*" If therefore there was anything to demand man's redemption it must have been God's justice and not the devil's :

"*Ideo per respectum ad Deum iustitia exigebat quod homo redimeretur, non autem per respectum ad diabolum.*"<sup>1</sup>

We may indeed speak of Christ's blood as our ransom (*pretium*), but St. Thomas reminds us that the word is not to be taken too strictly. If Christ redeemed us, it was not with gold and silver, but by the merits of His Passion, which freed us both from the fault and its consequences. In this sense Christ's Satisfaction is called a price, a redemption, a ransom, just as we likewise do in common parlance when speaking of any satisfaction which we make either for ourselves or for others :

"*Eius passio fuit quasi quoddam pretium, per quod liberati sumus ab utraque obligatione [peccati sc. et pœnæ]. Nam ipsa satisfactio, qua quis satisfacit sive pro se sive pro alio, pretium quoddam dicitur. . . .*"<sup>2</sup>

In another passage St. Thomas adopts the common saying that it was fitting that we should be delivered in accordance with justice :

<sup>1</sup> THOM. AQ. *Sum. Theol.* III.<sup>a</sup> pars. q. 48, art. 4, ad 2<sup>um</sup>. Cp. ad 3<sup>um</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* in corp. art.

"*Conveniens fuit ut per iustitiam homo a servitute diaboli liberaretur, Christo satisfaciente pro ipso per suam passionem.*"<sup>1</sup>

The context allows us to see that this fitness is not based on any right whatsoever of the devil's; any ambiguity which may lurk in the above is moreover dispelled by the parallel passage in the *Commentary on the Sentences*, where it is plainly pointed out that this fitness was in our respect:

"*Ex parte nostra fuit congruum ut satisfaciendo nos eriperet: ut non solum ipse iuste nos liberaret (quod esset si violentia uteretur), sed etiam nos iuste liberaremur.*"<sup>2</sup>

As the devil had no rights over us, it follows that his temporary possession was ended when our sins were forgiven and when we were reconciled with God, and that no other legal proceeding was needed. Nevertheless, as in point of fact the devil received his due punishment in Christ's Passion which he had himself brought about, St. Thomas retains—though he does not erect it as a principle—the traditional opinion of an abuse of power:

"*Excessit modum potestatis sibi traditæ a Deo, machinando in mortem Christi, qui non habebat meritum mortis.*"<sup>3</sup>

This is the only concession St. Thomas is prepared to make to the authority of a long-standing popular theological explanation; bearing in mind the principles already laid down, even this concession is seen to be merely verbal.

We find in St. Bonaventure a like doctrine though it is less clearly stated. The devil, he says, has no lawful right over mankind:

"*Homo contra ipsum ferebat chirographum; nec per illud acquirebatur aliquod ius diabolo. Quamvis enim homo iuste deti-*

<sup>1</sup> THOM. AQ. *Sum. Theol.* III.<sup>a</sup> pars. q. 46, art. 3, ad 3<sup>um</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> *In III. Sent. Dist. xx. q. 1<sup>a</sup>, art. 4, quæstiuncula 2<sup>a</sup>, ad 2<sup>um</sup>.*

<sup>3</sup> *Sum. Th.* III.<sup>a</sup> pars. q. 49, art. 2.



neretur, ipse tamen iniuste detinebat." "Absque dubio homo iuste detinebatur, sed diabolus nullo eum iusto titulo detinebat nec possidebat, quoniam malæ fidei possessor fuit." <sup>1</sup>

But in spite of this the devil possesses us, though unjustly; there are moreover in the world many other owners who thus possess what is not their own:

"Quia multi possident iniusto titulo, quorum diabolus princeps et dux est." <sup>2</sup>

Having once established these principles St. Bonaventure is, however, ready to adopt the common modes of speech. Justice was fulfilled in the work of the redemption because the devil lost his power, for having struck the guiltless One:

"Iuste perdidit genus humanum, quia extendit manum suam in innocentem." <sup>3</sup>

St. Bonaventure considers that the method of the redemption was one of wonderful prudence, and to prove it he has recourse to St. Augustine's simile of the mouse-trap.<sup>4</sup> But he also admits that, had a different method been adopted, God's justice would have likewise had its place, though it would have been less evident:

"Utrum si liberasset per potentiam fuisset ibi iustitia, dicendum quod sic; sed tamen non fuisset ita manifesta." <sup>5</sup>

St. Bonaventure's mystic formulæ, however good their author's intentions, were quite of a nature to revive the olden errors, and we can only be thankful that scholasticism preferred to seek its inspiration in the more stable principles of St. Thomas Aquinas.

<sup>1</sup> BONAVENT. *In III. Sent. Dist. xix. art. 1, q. 2, ad 5<sup>um</sup>*. Quaracchi's edition, p. 404.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid. Dist. xix. ; dubium iii. p. 413.*

<sup>3</sup> *Dist. xx. q. 3, ad 3<sup>um</sup>, p. 423.*

<sup>4</sup> *Dist. xx. q. 5, p. 428.*

<sup>5</sup> *Dist. xx. ; dub. ii. p. 432.*

In the latter's works the question of the devil is put in its proper place. The problem of the Atonement consists in re-establishing harmony between God and the sinner, and our deliverance from the devil follows our reconciliation as a matter of course. Henceforth the devil will no longer hold any position either among the objects of the Incarnation,<sup>1</sup> or among the reasons determining the fitness of the Passion,<sup>2</sup> where formerly he had held an important place from which even the Lombard had scrupled to evict him.

In such wise was the opinion of the devil's rights, of which we hear so much until the eleventh century, reduced to its proper proportions—in other words, practically to nil. On that opinion many of the Fathers had dwelt with evident pleasure, finding it congenial to their mystical habits of mind. But scholasticism, before condescending to incorporate it in the new theological synthesis, insisted on scrutinising its claims, the result being the practical collapse of the theory, which was retained only in an amended form.

Mediæval theology may be said to have proclaimed against the devil's rights a regular war, of which it is easy to pick up the historical traces. St. Anselm was the strategist who thought out the plan of campaign and fixed beforehand on the positions to be occupied. The battle was waged with great vigour by Abælard, though also with a temerity which carried him beyond his goal and delayed the final success of the enterprise. Happily St. Bernard was there to maintain—though not without some con-

<sup>1</sup> *Sum. theol.* III.<sup>a</sup> pars. q. 1, art. 2. *Cp. In III. Sent.* Dist. i. q. 1, art. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* q. 46, art. 1. *Cp. In III. Sent.* Dist. xx. q. 1, art. 3 *Contra Gentes*, iv. 54.

fusion—the wavering ranks of the orthodox, and less than a century afterwards St. Thomas was able to complete in peace the victory.

## VI

Since that time theologians, when they busy themselves at all with the matter, do no more than comment on the teaching of St. Thomas, and indeed they could scarcely have chosen a better master. But all of them also, from Suarez down to Döerholt,<sup>1</sup> either say, or give it to be understood, that this teaching is as old as the Church; nor do they appear to have the slightest doubt as to the prevalence of this identical opinion ever since theology came into being. Petavius and Thomassinus alone, those two great founders of positive theology, suspected the existence of historical difficulties.

Petavius, in order to show that God wonderfully showed forth both His justice and His wisdom in the mystery of the Atonement, quotes in abundance—though with no sense of order—the Patristic texts which the reader already knows. He pays a passing tribute to the opinions of Origen and Gregory of Nyssa and to the metaphors of St. Gregory the Great. He mentions Abælard's denial, and has nothing but praise for the vehement refutation of the rash sophist which St. Bernard undertook in defence of Scripture. On the other hand St. Anselm is not mentioned. From all this our learned author infers that the devil has no real rights, that his power over sinners is held by God's permission, that there can be no question of his being treated with justice, and that all this is the

<sup>1</sup> SUAREZ, *De Inc. Disp.* iv. sect. iii. 9; *Comm. in Sum. Theol.* III.\* pars. q. 49, art. 2. Cp. DÖERHOLT, *op. cit.* pp. 128-136.



evident and unanimous teaching of tradition.<sup>1</sup> We should have expected to find in Petavius a little more of the historical sense.

The investigations undertaken by Thomassinus were better ordered, and his conclusions are therefore more true to facts. He admits with the Fathers that the devil justly held men under his yoke, but that he owed this power to God's permission. In this fashion he reconciles the apparently divergent expressions of some of the Fathers and absolves Anselm—whose opinion he nevertheless considers almost audaciously novel—from any complicity with Abælard. Whatever the devil's right may be he was justly deprived of it, and this for two reasons; because he exceeded his power, and also because it was a Man who paid men's debt. Thomassinus is also aware that some of the Fathers speak of a ransom paid to the devil—he quotes as instances Ambrose and St. Gregory—but this opinion is alien alike to common-sense and to piety and our author is right glad that the other Fathers are against it.<sup>2</sup>

So far all is well, but Thomassinus goes further, and at a later stage proceeds to inquire whether the price of our redemption was paid to God or to the devil,<sup>3</sup> for, he states, many of the Fathers did think that Christ's blood was paid to the devil—a view which he ascribes indiscriminately to all those writers whose real feelings he had already rightly portrayed. Naturally enough he has no difficulty in finding authorities for the contrary who state that it was to God that Christ's blood was offered. He therefore draws his inference as follows:—"Who does not

<sup>1</sup> PETAVIUS, *De Inc. Verbi*, lib. ii. v. 8-18.

<sup>2</sup> THOMASSINUS, *De Inc. Verbi Dei*, lib. i. iii. 1-19.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* lib. ix. viii.

understand that all these benefits are the result of a sort of overflowing of the justice so copiously furnished by Christ's blood—so much so that He made satisfaction not merely to God, as equity required, but even (*quasi ex iustitiæ redundantia*) to sin, to death and to the devil. As if the Word of God, who is Justice unchanging, would not depart from the way of justice even when dealing with injustice, sin and the devil!" In fine the rights are not in the devil but in God, and it was to God that the Saviour offered the merits of His blood. In this way Thomassinus forgets the excellent distinctions which he had made and falls back on the easier system of hasty and inexact generalisations. Hence we may say that even the positive theology of the seventeenth century, though it was not unconscious of the difficulty suggested to the mind by so many strange-sounding testimonies to the devil's rights, chose rather to seek a logical answer to the problem than to expose impartially its history, which after all would have been the most effectual way of disposing of it.

It is also rather interesting to find that at this same period Christian eloquence and piety were still lagging far behind theology, for instance it is with some surprise that we find in Bossuet some curious reminiscences of the traditional common-places:

"Through sin, the devil who vanquished us is become our master. . . . Hence our deliverance consists in no more than in this proud spirit . . . having dared to commit a fearful crime against the person of the Son of God, though he knew that in Him there was none of his, and having thereby lost his kingdom. . . . *He can do no more because he willed to do too*

*much.* The Son of God conquered him by letting him do his worst.”<sup>1</sup>

In one of his sermons<sup>2</sup> we find the same ideas yet more rigidly expressed.

“In the work of our Salvation God had proposed to walk in the ways of justice, and as we had, by a most righteous sentence, passed into the possession of our enemy, *it was necessary to free us by the customary forms.* This was why He delivered Himself voluntarily to the powers of darkness and to the fury of hell. As the Fathers say ‘He enticed our enemy to the fight by concealing His Godhead.’ The rash one approached and endeavoured to bring Him under his yoke. But no sooner had he laid hands on Him, who owed nothing to death because he was sinless, than God, who in the work of our salvation willed to manifest His mercy through His justice, gave a judgment in our favour, decreeing that the devil for having seized the guiltless would be forced to relinquish all sinners. . . . Those who knew anything of the writings of our holy doctors must admit that, though I have not quoted their actual words, I have not uttered anything which is not drawn from their teaching.” We grant this willingly, we could only have wished that Bossuet had shown less faithfulness to the ancient doctors.

We have quoted this curious relic of a previous age merely as a reminder. The question has now long since been settled, and the devil’s rights no longer encumber the theology of the Atonement. Looking backwards the reader will also be able to say whether

<sup>1</sup> *Elévations sur les mystères*, xxiii.<sup>e</sup> semaine, v.<sup>e</sup> Élev. Garnier’s edition, pp. 501-502.

<sup>2</sup> *Sermon pour le Vendredi Saint* (1661). Lebarq’s edition, iii. pp. 727-728.



it is true that, at any period, these rights ever quite monopolised the theological field.

Undoubtedly the Fathers gave undue room and importance to this question, and no one can accuse us of having been too sparing in our selection of the texts which show this. But just as it would be childish to ignore, or explain away, or approve all their theories on the subject, so also it would be unjust and wrong to make it out to be their only thought. The fact is duly recorded not only by Catholic historians such as M. Turmel: "Let it be noticed that side by side with the trap-theory we find in the writings of the Fathers the doctrine of Sacrifice."<sup>1</sup> On the Protestant side, Dorner writes: "Justin did not teach that Christ was the ransom given to Satan; *nor in fact did any of the better-known Fathers ever pretend to comprise in this idea the whole meaning of Christ's death.*"<sup>2</sup> "*This doctrinal outgrowth,*" writes M. Grétilat, "only shows to what extent the idea of the need of a ransom, paid by Christ's death, exercised the consciousness of the early church."<sup>3</sup> Even M. Lichtenberger admits that in the Patristic period *the idea of a debt paid to God was soon to prevail over the idea of a ransom given to the devil.*"<sup>4</sup>

But, better than all these avowals, however pleasing, we have the testimony of the facts. History shows us the great place held by the doctrine of the devil's rights—though under divers forms which it would be well to distinguish—in Patristic literature.

<sup>1</sup> TURMEL, *Annales de Philosophie chrétienne* (February 1903), p. 525, note 1. Cp. p. 528.

<sup>2</sup> DORNER, *Lehre von der Person Christi* (Stuttgart, 1845), 2nd section, p. 418.

<sup>3</sup> GRÉTILLAT, *op. cit.* iv. p. 283.

<sup>4</sup> LICHTENBERGER, *op. cit.* p. 138.

But whilst history teaches us its extent, it also teaches us its limits. Without fear of being contradicted we may say that not one of the Fathers considered this doctrine to be the complete expression of the Atonement, and that, even among those who favoured it the most, it never held more than a subordinate position from which it was to be easily expelled when theology grew stronger.

The theory was an impurity which, all too long, stuck to the true doctrine, as the slag clings to the metal. But as in the latter case, so in the former, improved methods soon secured its elimination. Or, to change our simile and make our own the happy expression used above by M. Grétilat, it was a parasitic growth, of which the quite extraordinary vigour and fruitfulness testifies to the strength of the trunk of doctrine on which it grew, whilst its singularity, contrasting with its habitat, throws into relief the continuity of the authentic tradition on which it relied for support.

## CONCLUSION

HAVING reached the end of our lengthy task it is now time to recollect ourselves, to recall the object of our search, and make, if needs be, an inventory of the results of our labour.

### I

Our object was to give the history of the Catholic doctrine of the Atonement. Such a study could not fail to be helpful and opportune at a time when the evolution of dogma is uppermost in all minds, and in fact it seemed to us a vital need in consequence of our foes having already taken up their position on the new ground. It is no longer a question of discussing among ourselves whether Christ's Satisfaction was or was not *ad strictos iuris apices*; it is not even sufficient to refute with the help of excellent syllogisms the old-fashioned arguments of our modern Socinians. An assault had been made on the very foundations of our edifice, and serious historians, such as Ritschl, and Harnack and Sabatier, had considered themselves in a position to declare that our doctrine has not the traditional titles to which it lays claim. Whereas theologians had confidently asserted—without always first examining the facts—that the Fathers are unanimous, historians on the other hand could find nothing but disagreement; Latin Fathers disagreeing with the Greek Fathers, the Middle Ages disagreeing with all the Fathers generally, and, what is worse,



disagreement between tradition as a whole and the Gospel.

The unquestioned ability of these writers, and their very assurance, sufficed, and doubtless will long suffice, to ensure to their statements that blind submissiveness which an unlearned public thinks due to the appearance of learning and research. But we fear that, in the sight of those who examine matters more closely, what will suffer will not be the Church, but the credit of such writers, for, if our work has not been wholly in vain, its first result must have been to show how unfounded are the hasty generalisations which it is customary to oppose to the claims of the Catholic Church.

After having witnessed the immense growth in the doctrine of the Atonement from St. Justin to St. Cyril, and from Tertullian to St. Gregory, after having taken cognisance of the number and variety of the texts, we are struck with admiration of the ability of those writers who were able to summarise in a few lines the whole evolution of the doctrine; we also understand better what the value of a history of the Atonement is in which three lines from St. Augustine, and as many from St. Ambrose, stand for the whole of Latin theology, and in which the Greek theology comes to a close with St. Athanasius and St. Gregory of Nyssa, whilst Fathers such as Eusebius of Cæsarea, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, and St. Cyril of Alexandria are scarcely, or not at all, alluded to. We are now able to gauge the value of such history and, possibly, we may feel moved to ask in what it differs from romance.<sup>1</sup> On an appropriate selection of carefully truncated texts,

<sup>1</sup> On M. SABATIER, see the *Bulletin de Littérature ecclésiastique* (June 1903), pp. 186-189.

it is easy to construct a synthesis, but if the duty of a historian is first to amass facts, and secondly to interpret without bias the facts accumulated, then we believe and trust that the future will pass a severe judgment on these impressionist philosophers of history.

During the whole of our excursion into the past, we never lost sight of their works and their doctrines, nor do we scruple to own, now, that the calm audacity of their statements caused us at the outset some apprehension. But no sooner had we entered into contact with the facts than the false systems fell; in spite of their repeated and faithfully uniform statements, we were frequently able to point to mistakes either in their information or in their interpretations; the reader must forgive us if we took some malicious pleasure in laying the finger on such errors, for to do so was to us at once a relief and a sweet revenge. Should our work have only fulfilled the humble office of the stone which shatters the clay feet of the statue, we should have wherewith to congratulate ourselves, nor could we desiderate a better reward for our modest endeavour.

## II

But this controversial and so to speak negative result was not sufficient, or rather, it would not exist were it not based on another which is more real and positive. If we reject the too hasty and too simplified systems of our opponents, this is because we have found subsisting all throughout the Christian ages that one same fundamental idea which forms the mystery of the Atonement.

This is not the place to decide whether, in the

Church, some doctrines have for a time lived a hidden life, being comprised in other beliefs whence they were to emerge little by little, and so become explicit at the hour assigned by Providence. At any rate this was not the case with the doctrine of the Atonement. If we reduce it to its essence—*i.e.* to a certain real, objective and salutary efficaciousness ascribed to our Saviour's death—then we may say that this doctrine had at all times its own peculiar and independent life. By this we do not mean that it was always in the first place, nor that it was everywhere given the same relief, but that we find it sufficiently plainly in every period, and in all the Fathers.

Ever since the day when Christ said that He was giving His life for the salvation of the world, and His blood for the forgiveness of sins, the Church, like St. Paul, has wished to know nothing else save Christ, and Him crucified. For salvation, which we owe to Christ's whole mission, was consummated, and as it were concentrated, in the mystery of the Cross. Christ died to save us; in this formula of our ancient creeds, which even to-day nourishes the piety of both small and great, the Church has never ceased to perceive the expression of a sublime and supernatural reality, so much so, that this truth, which we can scarcely style a dogma, has always been considered an essential part—and possibly the most fundamental—of Christian faith.

### III

Now this truth was not always explained in the same way, nor was its meaning grasped by all with equal comprehension. Side by side with identical,



unchanging faith, there is room for progressive and varied theology. Hence that movement of Christian thought, of which we have sought to determine the direction and character and define the periods. Was this movement governed by any law? Does it admit of a description? Our task was both difficult and important, for it is equally dangerous to lose oneself in details, or to sacrifice the details in the endeavour to construct a perfect whole. What we have said in criticising the hasty and imperfect systems of certain historians is of a nature to put us on our guard against attributing too much to our own. Nevertheless, without wishing to put forward any definitive synthesis, we think it possible to assign certain periods to the development.

First of all, one period which deserves separate treatment, on account both of its character and its importance, is that of the New Testament. Here we are taught by Christ Himself, and by His inspired apostles, concerning the great mystery "which had been hid from ages," the mystery of the "restoring of all things in Christ."

The world's Salvation is essentially bound up with our Saviour's death, for which reason the prophets predicted it, Christ Himself announced it as the fulfilment of His mission here below, whilst His disciples extolled its various effects: the deliverance of our souls, the expiation of our sins and our reconciliation with God. This is the practical side of the mystery, and that side which is of the most importance to us; the inspired authors are but little concerned in seeking any explanation, though here and there we find in their works the germs of the theological explications to be suggested later on; such are the ideas of ransom or redemption, of self-

devotion, of repairing obedience, of sacrifice, of expiation and of penal substitution. But all these ideas remain rather misty, and even St. Paul has, strictly speaking, no settled theology concerning the matter.

Meanwhile, in another circle, minds were at work reflecting on the Saviour's general work; here He was considered as Light and Life, as the Resurrection; He lives in our souls, into which He brings the Father and the Spirit, and He makes us children of God. In this we recognise the mystical teaching of St. John. The difference between the two schools of thought is apparent even in their language; St. Paul speaks of the "Man Jesus" whereas St. John deals with the "Word made Flesh." But the difference does not amount to a contradiction, for St. Paul too is acquainted with the doctrines of Divine adoption, and the life of the soul, and the redemption of the body which we owe to Christ, whilst St. John also points out the salutary value and the expiatory character of our Saviour's death. These are the two complementary aspects of Christ's work; each of the two Apostles lays stress on that side which strikes him most, and thus each became the starting-point of a different current in Christian thought. In neither do we find a theory, for the period of the New Testament was one of revelation and not of science, but they brought forth a rich doctrinal supply with which the Fathers were afterwards free to deal.

But theological speculation was not aroused immediately. In the earliest times the Church was too much taken up in the apostolic work of extending her boundaries, and defending and organising herself, to be able to devote much time to reflecting on her

doctrinal treasure. Hence the beginning of the twin literatures, the Greek and the Latin—a period which in the East extends as far down as St. Justin and in the West down to St. Cyprian—produced nothing beyond mere statements, poorly clad repetitions of the expressions of Scripture; the treasure was well guarded, but nothing was done to increase it.

The Patristic tradition grows fairly steadily from the third to the sixth century. In the East its development began rather earlier, with Irenæus and Origen, but here it also ceased earlier—viz. in the fifth century with St. Cyril of Alexandria. The Latin Church was less precocious but here the development continued until the time of St. Leo and St. Gregory the Great. Yet in spite of the difference in the national spirit and in the individual character of the Fathers, in spite of the difference in time and circumstances, the doctrine of the Atonement followed in both Churches a similar way. The principle everywhere was that Christ's death is the destruction of sin and its consequences. As it is evident that the two members of this proposition are correlative, it follows that, though they may be considered separately, though we may essay to enter more deeply into the idea of sin, or turn our attention rather to the efficaciousness of Christ's death, any progress made on one hand must necessarily involve some progress on the other. Sin and the saving death are the two data of the problem, and both may be considered diversely and may vary; in the nature of these variations we have a criterion for classifying the different solutions suggested for the problem, and also for testing their correctness.

The Fathers never investigated the inner nature of sin; they were content to know its results—this



alone is sufficient to show that their explanations, not only of the nature of sin, but also of the nature of the remedy, must be superficial.

Sin, first of all, may be considered in its most general result—*i.e.* as a wound inflicted on mankind. It was sin that caused us to fall from the supernatural condition to which we had been promoted, into one of corruption and death. The Redeemer comes to repair all this, and to unite our nature to Himself, and thus bring it back to God-like and everlasting life. Considered in this wise, it is the Incarnation which is the great mystery of Salvation, and the Cross is but an episode which sets a seal on Christ's victory over death, and prepares us to achieve a like victory. The Atoning death is not denied or suppressed, but it is made a part of a more imposing plan which, as it were, throws it into the background. This speculative current, proceeding from St. John through St. Irenæus, involved nearly the whole of the Greek theology, whereas it was scarcely felt at all among the Western Fathers; it is the expression of the supernatural restoration which is implied in our Saviour's mission.

Another result of sin was to put us in the bondage of the devil; hence Salvation must consist in a redemption. This idea, which had been suggested by the Gospel and by St. Paul, was to prove of extraordinary fertility and to undergo some surprising deviations. Here fancy reigns, either in the place of, or side by side with, the old mystical speculations. If we consider the devil as God's rival, who keeps in bondage sinful souls, than the Saviour, to redeem us, will have to pay him a price, and this ransom can be nothing else save His own self. This childish and brutal idea was adopted by several of the Fathers.

But soon the absurdity and blasphemy involved in the opinion came to be felt, and then it was remembered that Satan, far from being God's partner, was but a delegate, whose whole power was held on sufferance. It was, however, argued that God either desired to deal with him justly, or possibly was obliged to do so, and therefore set a trap by which the devil lost his rights in unconsciously putting to death One who is not his by right. In this opinion the devil is still treated with justice, only the justice is distributive instead of commutative. Such is the scheme of the argument adopted by the majority of the Fathers, and which, in the period of decay, was to be embellished with much wealth of illustration of very questionable taste. That it thus lent itself so readily to fanciful handling is doubtless the reason why this opinion was so long popular.

But the Fathers were not altogether unmindful of the nature of sin, which appeared to them in the light of a fault which deserves punishment. Hence the mystery of the Atonement must consist in our being spared this punishment, because our Saviour deigned to suffer in our stead. This is the idea of penal substitution which was largely drawn from *Isaias liii*. Again in our own souls sin is as a blot, as a stain, which must be washed away ; hence the many expressions implying that we are cleansed, and washed, and born again, in Christ's blood, whose death thus assumes a ritual character ; the epistle to the Hebrews helps us to feel how much more effective was Christ's blood than the powerless ablutions of the old dispensation. Lastly sin has a certain effect on God, whose anger it excites. For us to be saved He must be appeased and reconciled with us. Following in

the steps of St. Paul, the Fathers therefore saw in Christ's death a sacrifice of propitiation.

Christ's death itself also came in for consideration. It was the death of the guiltless, and as such it was undeserved; hence it pays the debt contracted by the guilty. It was undergone willingly and lovingly, and yet obediently to His Father's will, hence its superiority over the sacrifices of the Old Law, for here Christ is at once the Priest and the Victim. What was pleasing to His Father was not the shedding of His blood, but the whole-heartedness of His love—a fact which warns us that we must seek the value of His death less in His outward actions than in His inner feelings, in other words that we must rise from the penal to the moral side of His death. Lastly, His death was the death of one who was God, hence it was a sufficient redemption for all the crimes of mankind. From all this it was inferred that the Son of God alone was able to save us, because He alone deserved no penalty, and because He alone could offer to God a spotless Sacrifice, of which the worth would exceed that of the whole of mankind.

These ideas grew up together in the minds of the Fathers, nor did any one of them become dominant, simply because no single one of them had been inquired into at all thoroughly. Christ's death had not formed the subject-matter of any close study, nor had any inquiry been made into the essence of the grievousness of sin; this explains why the connections between the two remained so superficial. Nothing is more instructive than the attempt made by several of the Fathers to synthetize the data on the basis of the philosophy of sacrifice. Sin, they reasoned, can only be atoned for by sacrifice, but



neither a man nor an angel can offer a sufficient sacrifice. Hence the sacrifice of the God-man was needed. Such was Origen's argument in the third century; in the sixth century it was repeated by St. Gregory and, in the tenth, Atto of Vercelli could still find nothing better. But why was a sacrifice required? And what was it that gave Christ's sacrifice its great worth? These two all-important questions were left unanswered or, more correctly, they were given many answers, all of which were equally superficial. There can be no better proof that the Fathers never looked below the surface of the mystery, and, as a consequence, their theology of the Atonement, however rich it may be in details, is wanting in depth. The very multitude of the ideas they express prove that they never succeeded in finding a simple idea, which, by throwing light on the others, might give them both force and oneness. But, this notwithstanding, the labour of the Fathers, however superficial and piecemeal, was necessary to furnish the material on which the Middle Ages might work.

In effect, when we pass from the Patristic to the Scholastic period, a difference which we immediately perceive is that the doctrine of the Atonement has left the commentaries and homilies in which it had been usual to deal with it more or less haphazard, and has taken up its rightful position in theology, and this outward progress betokens an inward one, for if it has been possible to assign the doctrine to its true place, this is surely because its meaning has been grasped better.

Another difference which we notice is that, in Scholasticism, we no longer meet those disjointed ideas which, though so easy to understand when kept

apart, we found so difficult to group ; nor do we find any more those oratorical and poetic expressions in which the metaphor obscures the reality. Here we are in the presence of an organised doctrine expressed in exact and scientific terms ; in other words, we have at last found a system. This system, which is named and explained by a single word, is the system of Satisfaction. This word has now taken the place of the many terms used by the Fathers, and it denotes an idea, and one idea alone.

It is true that there were theologians who used the term satisfaction to denote the idea of penal substitution ; according to them, Christ saved us because He made Satisfaction in our stead to God, and He did so by suffering in our lieu the penalty of our sins. This was a neat way of putting the old traditional idea into a new form. But, according to the greatest of our Doctors, Satisfaction stands for something different. It denotes that act of our Saviour by which He deigned to accept freely from God the mission of redeeming mankind, an act which extended over His whole life, but which was consummated only on the Cross, where He offered His sufferings and His death for our Salvation, becoming obedient, to atone for our rebellion, becoming humble, to repair the evil of our pride, and suffering in order to expiate our sensuality. This was an act of love which in anyone else would have had a high moral worth, but which in the case of Christ, who was the Son of God, was of a value absolutely infinite.

But why was such Satisfaction called for ? Because sin is essentially an offence against God—*i.e.* a disorder existing in the order of things and occasioned by the free-will of a creature who is consequently bound to repair it. But, on the other hand, sin

being directed against God is in some sense infinitely wicked, and therefore for it to be properly repaired—and God, though not bound to do so, chose this means to convince us of its grievousness—it required God. In this is the explanation of the Incarnation and of the Passion. We know now why a sacrifice was needed, and, were anyone still to question its necessity, we have only to bid him reflect on the enormity of sin. Above all, we know now what was the value of Christ's sacrifice, and that the word in this case stands for no mere ritual symbolism, but for a sublime moral sacrifice.

The repairing of sin, which was the obstacle between God and ourselves, by means of a proportionate satisfaction—such is the Atonement. This is the central truth from which, as from a spring, all the others flow. By the Atonement sin is destroyed, the Divine anger is appeased, and God forgives us and again heaps benefits upon us. The penalty of our sins is obliterated with sin itself, without it being necessary for us to measure out the quantity of compensation due for it. We have no longer any need to trouble ourselves about the devil: his temporary power, which was the result of sin, ceased with sin's existence; we were redeemed by being justified, no other process was needed. The final overthrow of the devil's rights, which had been the torment of so many of the Fathers, coincides with the appearance of the doctrine of Satisfaction.

Moreover, to facilitate the application to us of Christ's merits, there is in His very Passion an appeal to our confidence and love, and an example which turns our hearts towards God. In it above all there is a source of grace and of never-failing merits which make up for our own shortcomings. Not only does



Christ's Satisfaction atone for the evil of sin ; this is merely its negative side ; on its positive side it is a cause of the greatest good, and of that grace which makes us the adopted sons of God and partakers of His nature. This merit comes to us if only we be in the right dispositions, because Christ is the second Adam, the Father and the Head of restored mankind ; because through a mysterious solidarity we have become members of a body of which He is the Head. Thus those mystical speculations which had so pleased the Greeks find their place in the doctrine of Satisfaction when once this doctrine is properly grasped.

Hence one single well-found idea sufficed to combine all the scattered details in one harmonious synthesis, just as the electric spark suffices to bring about the combination of elements which so far had been existing apart. This simple and fertile principle was St. Anselm's invention, and the emendations made later on in this system only bring out the more the genius of its inventor. It is a striking thing that the idea of Satisfaction, though it was novel, and though it appeared unexpectedly, nevertheless found its way into theology quickly and without the semblance of a struggle. A few alterations were made by Bonaventure and Aquinas, and forthwith St. Anselm's doctrine became the Church's own. This came about because it was felt that this doctrine was at once the simplest and the deepest expression of the traditional data ; when it came it was welcomed as a godsend, as a long-expected idea for which Christian thought had been preparing ever since the time of the Greek Fathers. Thanks to the theory of Satisfaction, the doctrine of the Atonement which, so far, had received only fragmentary and superficial explanations, has at last been stated scientifically.

## IV

Is there anything surprising in the slow unfolding of the theology of the Atonement? Is it not somewhat rash, not to say disrespectful, to assert that the Fathers were doctrinally less perfect than their successors? Such a question might have shocked those theologians who, under the pretext of upholding tradition, were wont to describe even the most insignificant doctrines of the schools as everlasting. At the present day, however, such a question is meaningless to those whose historical studies have acquainted them with the development of Christian doctrine and who have learnt, at the school of facts, that, if development tends to progress, it necessarily implies less perfection at the outset. Far from being a matter for scandal, this discovery proves the life and the constant youth of our doctrines.

The more complex a doctrine the longer it will take to reach its perfect expression, and certainly it would be difficult to find a doctrine of greater complexity than that of the Atonement, which embraces the eternal plans of God, His mercy, His Justice, the grievousness of sin, the different meanings of our Saviour's death, and the conditions governing the application of its merits. "It would be easier," says St. Athanasius, "to number the waves of the sea than to tell all the benefits of our Saviour's Passion." It was only natural that so vast a problem should often be stated and solved imperfectly.

The case in hand is all the more interesting in that, on this point, Christian thought was never opposed by any outward influence. It would not be easy to find in Catholic theology another instance of a doctrine

which grew of its own accord without ever being challenged, or, at any rate, without ever having been strictly defined. This fact proves that, whatever the function of heresies may be, they are not essential, and that doctrinal and theological development can take place under influences from within as well as under the stress of opposition.

Bearing this in mind, it is both pleasing and encouraging to contemplate the efforts made by the great Doctors of the past to penetrate ever more deeply into the mystery of the Atonement. Their progress may have been often so slow as to arouse our impatience, but it was constant. Little by little wrong ideas were eliminated and non-essentials set aside, and attention was concentrated on the main points whence in due season will proceed the final answer. In this doctrinal laboratory, in which for fourteen centuries the Doctors of the Church toiled and sought, the work even of the humblest had its place, and the failures and mistakes of some are finally seen to have facilitated the task of their more fortunate successors. The work of theology is, in the spiritual world, the counterpart of the work of science in the world in which we live, and who does not know the patient observation and the many failures through which alone it was possible to determine finally the laws which regulate even the simplest of natural phenomena?

We have just suggested the analogy of discovery, but a more trite comparison to express the evolution of doctrine is that of the germ, and in fact it is more appropriate, because it expresses the vital continuity of the development. This comparison applies most aptly to the doctrine of the Atonement. The seed was sown in the Christian soil by Christ's teaching



and by that of St. Paul. The seed sprang up, and in the writings of the Fathers resulted in a rich and varied vegetation. Here, among the good saplings of the true race, Speculation throws out its creepers, whilst Fancy sends up, here and there, its branches loaded with quaint leaves and exotic flowers. So great a luxuriance long prevented any one plant from pushing its head above the rest. But quietly and imperceptibly the roots of one had tapped the right soil, and, of a sudden, the sapling sprang up into a powerful tree. Its branches and its roots soon spread far and wide, and, without a struggle, those which had been its companions drooped and perished. Their life had departed elsewhere, and the great tree could now bring forth in solitude its blossoms and its fruit.

If we have been successful in making clear this development, and if we have succeeded in doing so not by means of *a priori* considerations but by merely passing facts in review, then we are convinced that the doctrine of the Atonement will emerge from our study not only cleared of the false ideas which disfigured it, not only fortified against the attacks of our modern historians and shown to be deeply rooted in tradition, but actually aggrandised by the century-long efforts of Christian thought to explore its depth. We now see that, in the Church, the Atonement was at all times—even before theology had arrived at its theoretical expression—a living and fruitful reality on which minds thrived and on which souls lived, and, seeing this, we understand better, because we feel it more, the sublime grandeur of the mystery of the cross. In this wise the history of the doctrine of the Atonement, which we were moved to undertake in defence of our belief, may also become an apology for the Faith.

At any rate this is what we strove to do, but with a task so great and so complex he would indeed be a rash man who should dare to say that he had succeeded in his undertaking—with even better reason than St. Anselm we may make our own the excuse which that great Doctor inscribed at the beginning of his immortal *Cur Deus Homo*: “I fear lest, just as I myself am apt to be indignant with bad artists, when I see our Lord depicted under a misshapen form, so it may happen to myself, if I presume to investigate so sublime a subject by rude, contemptible speculations. . . . I will however try my very best, not so much to show you that which you seek, as to seek it with you; but on this condition, which I desire should be implied in all I say, namely that if I shall say anything which a greater authority shall not confirm, even though I should seem to prove it logically, it shall be received with no more certitude than is given by the fact that so it appears to me in the meantime until God shall show me better. For if I am in any measure able to satisfy your inquiries, it will be certain that a wiser than I could do so more fully; and it is yet further to be noted that whatever man may say, or be able to know, about it, deeper arguments will lie yet hidden within so great a mystery.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ANSELM, *Cur Deus Homo*, i. 2.—*P.L.* clviii. col. 363-364.

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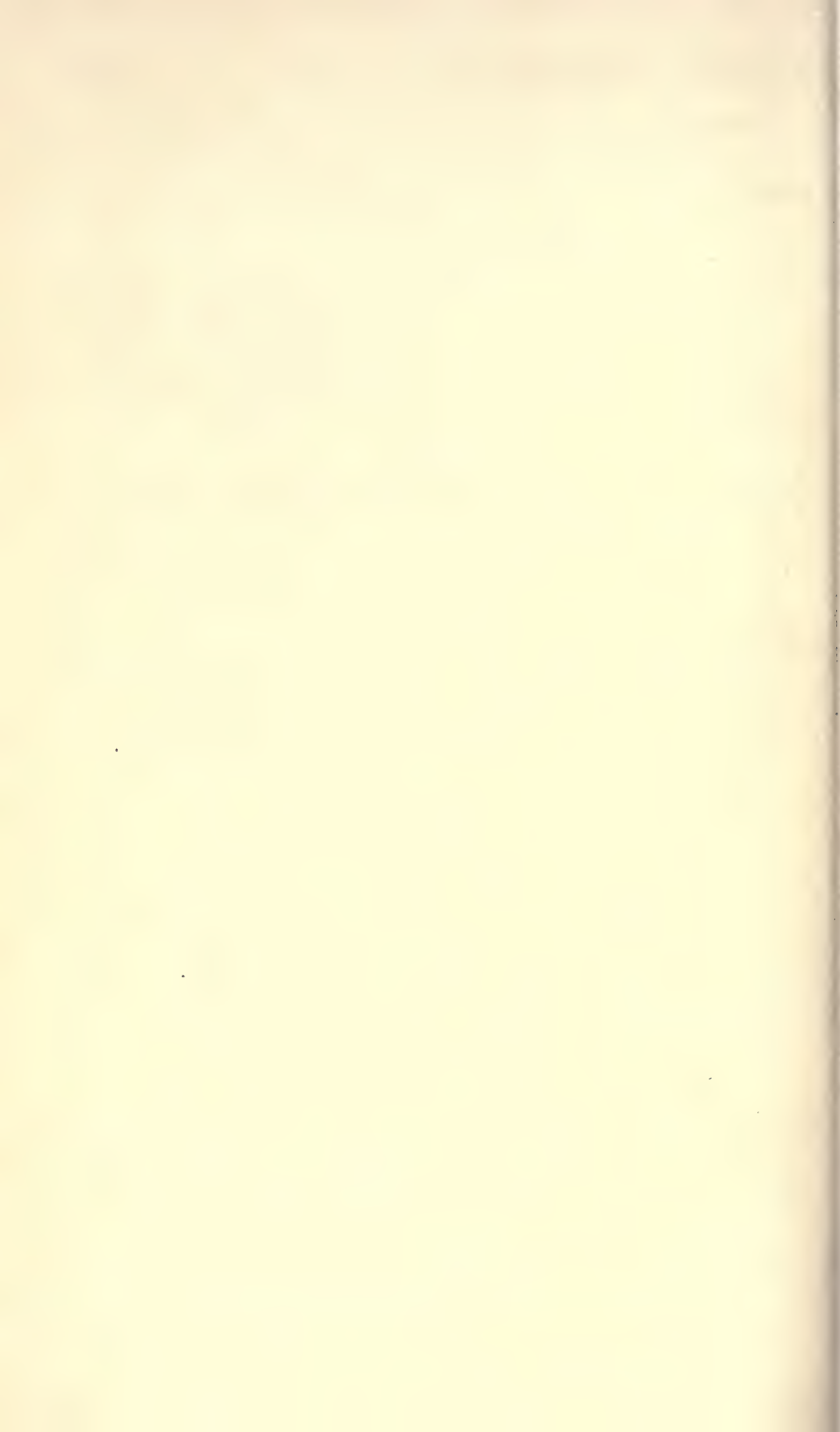
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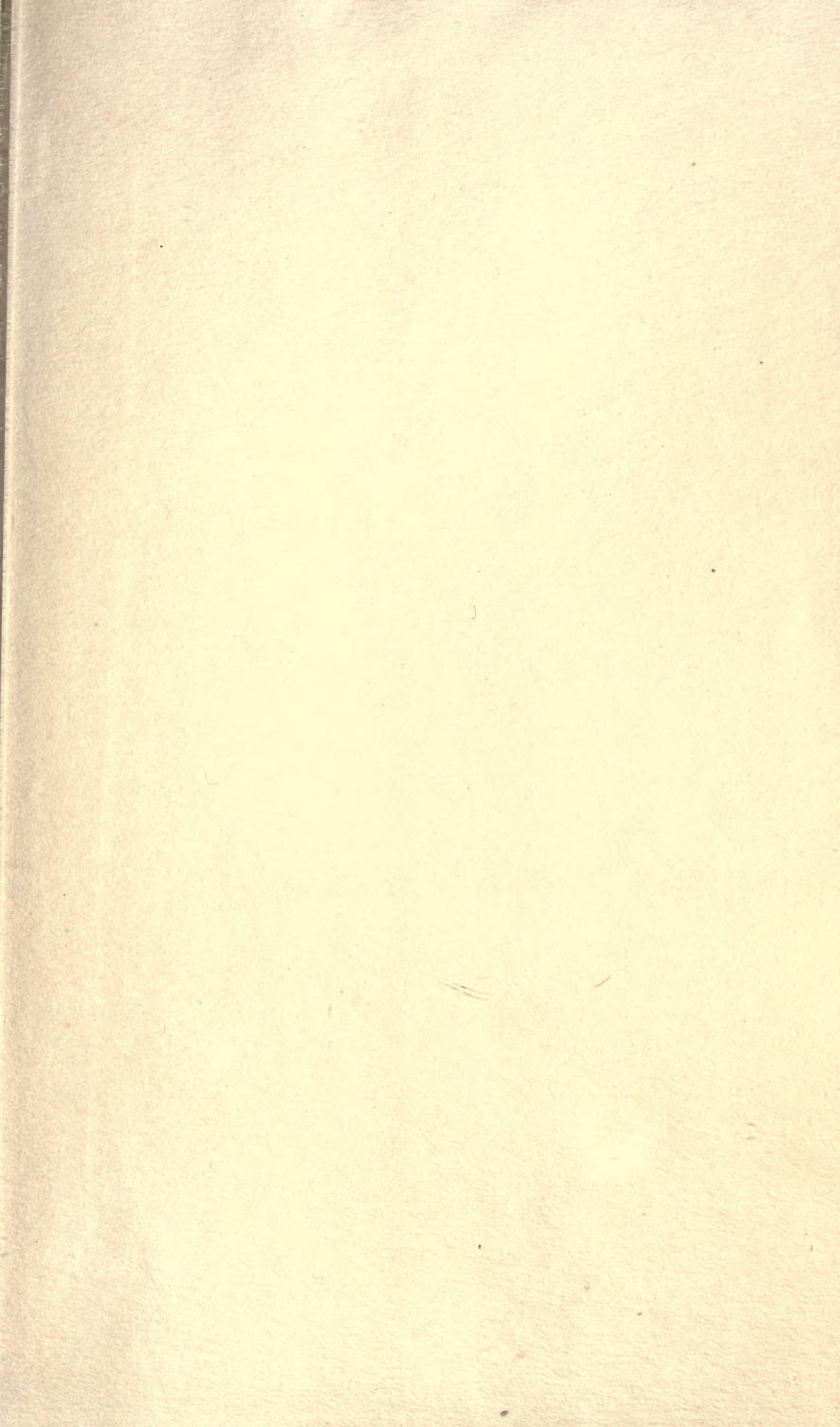
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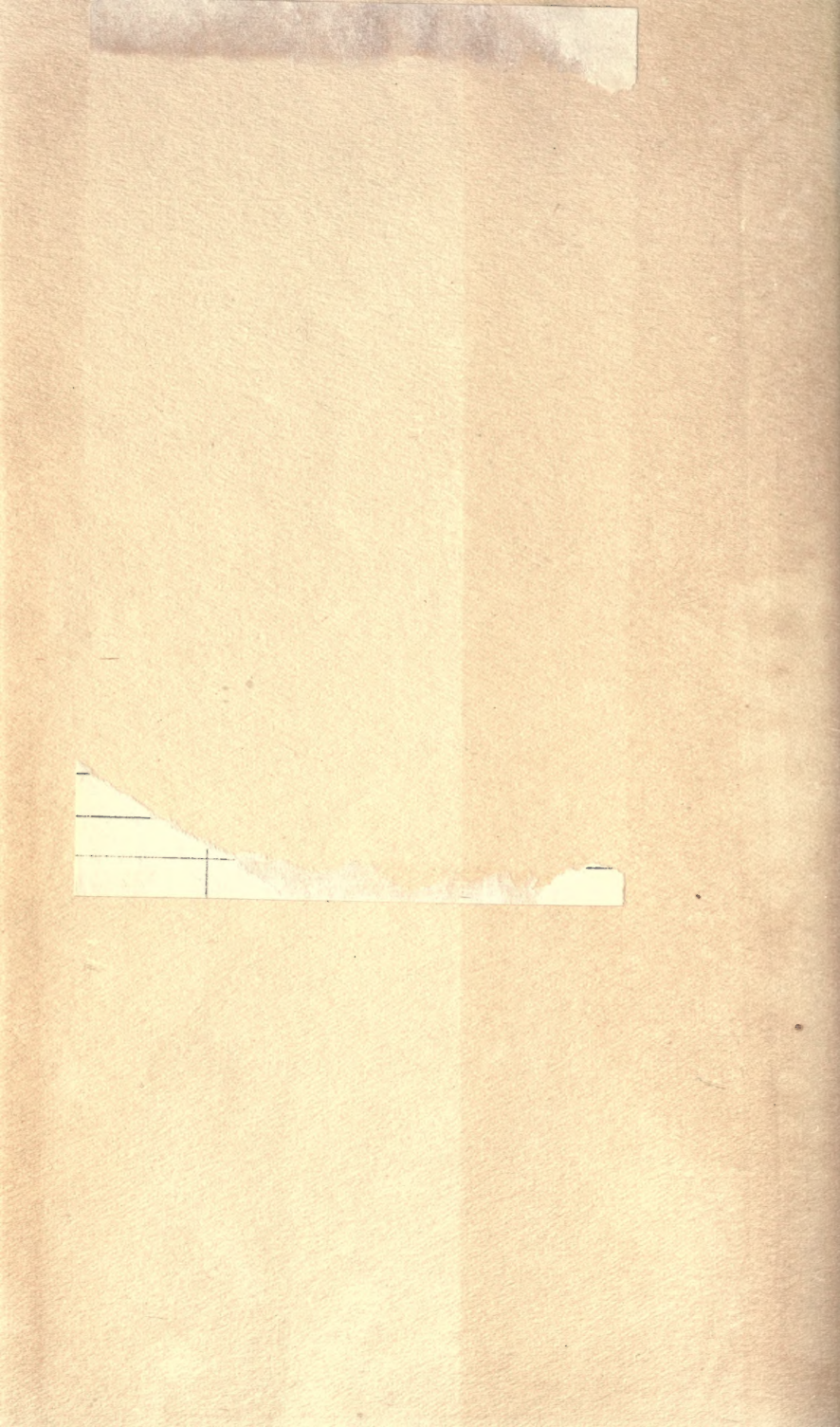
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